

**University of Cambridge
FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

**EXPLORING PLACE IDENTITY WITHIN A PRIMARY
SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY USING VISUAL METHODS**

L. Oxley

**Thesis submitted in part-fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Education in the University of Cambridge
Faculty of Education**

2012

**SUPERVISED BY
Dr Linda Hargreaves**

Word count: 19997

PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION

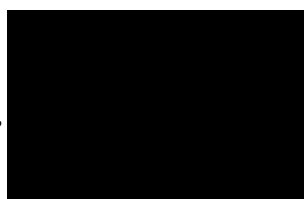
ABSTRACT

This thesis gives an account of a case study using visual methods to explore pupils' perception and experience of place within an upper primary school in southern England. The theoretical framework is based on Breakwell's four place identity principles; distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. One class, consisting of 21 pupils aged 9 years old, including 10 boys and 11 girls, took part in the study. It was found that there were a number of themes underlying the way in which pupils perceived and experienced place within the case study school. The main themes identified were achievement, freedom and friendship. The study concluded that pupils' sense of place identity is more likely to be positive if the places within their school facilitate their ability to achieve academically and socially whilst also presenting them with the opportunity to act independently and autonomously.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the sources of which I have availed myself have been stated in the body of the thesis and in the bibliography and that the rest of the work is my own. This thesis does not exceed 20,000 words in length.

Signed.....



.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my supervisor, Dr. Linda Hargreaves, for her patience and advice throughout my MEd research.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the pupils and staff of the school involved in the case study, without whom this research would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support throughout my studies.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT AND DECLARATION	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
CONTENTS	4
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	6
INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER 1: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY AND PLACE	11
1.1 Self-identity	13
1.2 Attachment to places	14
1.3 Place identity	17
1.4 Breakwell's principles of place identity	18
1.5 Place identity in school	19
1.6 Visual methods in place identity research	22
1.7 Summary of literature review	24
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY	25
2.1 Visual methodology	26
2.2 Case study research	30
2.3 Interviews	32
2.4 Children as active researchers	35
2.5 The present study	36

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	42
3.1 Diamond ranking activity	42
3.2 Maps of the school	45
3.3 Ideal school drawings	47
3.4 Photo scrapbooks	49
3.5 Thematic narrative analysis of interviews	58
3.6 Discussion of themes	61
3.7 Summary of findings from the present study	63
 CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION	 64
4.1 Overview of present study	64
4.2 Critical reflection	66
4.3 Implications for educational practice and future research	67
 REFERENCES	 69
 APPENDICES	 76

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

Table 2.1 – Table of data collection methods in relation to the research questions	page 26
Figure 2.1 - Diagram of data collection methods used	page 38
Figure 2.2 – Timeline to show when activities for data collection took place	page 41

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3.1 – Tables presenting the results of the diamond ranking activity	page 43
Figure 3.1– Example of one participant’s completed ‘map of my school’ activity	page 47
Figure 3.2 – Example of one participant’s completed ‘my ideal school’ activity	page 48
Table 3.2 – Table presenting the results from the frequency analysis of photographs included in the scrapbooks	page 49
Figure 3.3 – Banners along the corridor showing the school motto	page 53
Figure 3.4 – The electricity pole in the school ground	page 53
Figure 3.5 – The cross used in meditative assemblies on display in the theatre	page 57
Figure 3.6 – Diagram showing how the themes from the interview data link with the themes from the scrapbooks	page 62

INTRODUCTION

“Our sense of who we are, where we belong and what our obligations encompass – in short our identity – is profoundly affected by our sense of location”

(Harvey, 2001; cited in Loxley, O’Leary and Minton, 2011, p. 47)

We are surrounded by the physical world. All our interactions are mediated in some way by the material objects and places around us. This is why it is so important that we know what it is about our physical environment that causes us to form attachments to place and to incorporate our values and beliefs about particular places into our holistic self-identity. In the UK the majority of children spend a great deal of time in the place known as school. Crucial development of self takes place over the years between infancy and adulthood, and many of these years are spent as a member of a school community. The present study aims to explore how school children perceive and experience place within school and to identify the factors that contribute to this sense of place. By conducting this research it is hoped that suggestions will be raised as to how school can be a place that has positive connotations for pupils and how a positive sense of place identity can be formed and successfully incorporated into a rounded sense of self.

Self-identity is a complex construct consisting of many strands. There are various theories that seek to explain how identity is constructed. Social construction theory (Phoenix, 2007) suggests that we actively and dynamically construct our identities based on our social interactions, whilst Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978), proposes that we identify with particular social groups whose members are similar to ourselves. Most theories of identity seem to agree that we essentially have more than one identity which we present in our social interactions depending on the social role we are inhabiting at that time. To illustrate the way we are able to present different identities at different times, Goffman (1990) uses the metaphor of life as a theatrical performance in which each individual is an actor performing in a setting in front of an audience. These different identities include the focus of the present study - place identity.

Place can be thought of as subtly different from space. Space comprises the tangible physical surroundings in which we are situated, whereas place has a more complex explanation (Cresswell, 2004). Lefebvre (1991) describes place as social space, as opposed to the more concrete absolute space. When we first arrive somewhere new, we are aware that that space has a history, that it has meaning for people who inhabit it, and that there are social meanings constructed and enacted within this space. As we form a sense of the place in which we have arrived, we begin to associate our own meanings with the space around us, leading to the formation of a subjective and emotional attachment as we transform the space into place. Tuan (1977) suggested the metaphor of space as movement and place as pauses.

The concept of place identity suggests that our physical environment can be incorporated into our sense of self-identity. Our cognitions about the physical locations in which we spend our time give rise to certain feelings and values associated with particular places (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1995). Based on previous literature (Bizumic, Reynolds, Turner, Bromhead, and Subasic, 2009; Edgerton, McKechnie and McEwen, 2011), I propose that having positive associations with a place is more likely to enable us to take on the value system expected in that location and to incorporate that place into our self-identity to create a stable place identity. This suggests to me that having a positive place identity within school could play an important role in children's well-being and future prospects.

However, although clearly an important area of interest, place identity has been relatively under researched within school environments. If place identity does indeed have an impact on children's experience of school, I believe it is essential that education professionals work towards the prevention of a negative place identity within school. My professional experience of working with children who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school suggests that these pupils do not appear to have formed positive associations with their school environment. As there were over 5000 permanent exclusions from schools in England in 2009/10 (Department for Education, 2011), there is a need for further research in the area of place identity within school to potentially lower these numbers. I hope to be able to continue my research to a PhD focussing on the affect of permanent exclusion on pupils' sense of place identity within school.

However the aim of the present research is to explore the many factors which have an influence on the formation of a sense of place identity within school. Place and identity were investigated at a case study school with the aim of answering the following research questions:

- How do primary school pupils perceive and experience place within school?
- What factors can be identified as contributing to primary school pupils' sense of place identity?

To examine these questions, I have conducted a case study of one class of 9 year olds, or Year 4 in the English education system, in a junior school where I have been working as a teaching assistant. This research is envisaged as being beneficial for the school and for the individuals taking part in the research, as well as for myself as the researcher. The pupils taking part in the project will hopefully feel that their views have been listened to and are valued within school and the school will benefit from the information gathered on how pupils perceive places within the school. Findings from the study may even lead to suggestions that could be implemented to further promote a feeling of value and respect within the school as a whole. This project links with the 'pupil voice' aspect of the school's development plan as it involves the pupils in an aspect of school evaluation with the possibility of raising suggestions for school improvement. It also fits in with the Responsibility, Partnership and Enjoyment aspects of the school's vision (RESPECT) (see Appendix 1 for an extract from the school prospectus). In addition, there are links to the Every Child Matters outcome – Make a Positive Contribution – as the pupils have contributed to a real-life research project and have also contributed to school evaluation. Although the coalition government, which took office in 2010, has made shifts away from the Every Child Matters agenda (Puffett, 2010), the ethos of this policy has been retained at a local level.

The study used child-centred visual methodologies to explore how the children perceive places within school and the factors that contribute to this perception. I chose to use visual methods in this research because they are the ideal means to portray the actual space and they provide an age appropriate way to access young children's perceptions. As an emerging methodology (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008), visual

methods are becoming more popular in the social sciences, including psychological research, to explore concepts that participants may not be able to easily articulate in other ways. It may be difficult for 9 year olds to take part in a written exercise or an abstract interview considering place identity. However by using visual methods to facilitate a photo elicitation interview technique, it becomes easier for the participants to express their sense of place identity. This will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

This thesis is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter contains a review and critique of the current literature regarding place identity and related concepts. The second chapter discusses the methodology used for this study, including the ethical implications that need to be considered. The third chapter contains the results of the study and presents a discussion of the findings that can be deduced from these results. The fourth and final chapter suggests the conclusions that may be drawn from this research and the possible implications for educational practice.

CHAPTER 1: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY AND PLACE

This chapter will review and critique the current literature relevant to the concept of place identity within school. In order to fully explore this, the chapter will first consider literature in regard to self-identity and attachment before moving on to focus on place identity in general and finally the specific concept of place identity within school. The main argument of this thesis is that place plays an important role in the construction of our self-identity, with the specific research focus of school as a place that has an impact on the development and maintenance of self. Self-identity in general is a complex and contested concept with many facets, one of which is place identity. However, as well as identity being difficult to define definitively, place also is constructed differently in different disciplines. So whilst this thesis is written from a psychological perspective, the cross-disciplinary nature of place identity needs to be considered. For example, within geography Massey (1991) talks about ‘time-space compression’ which questions the way in which we define our sense of place in terms of modern life styles and globalisation. Massey (1991) argues that place is not a static concept, but needs to be thought of in terms of the social interactions that occur within place, as a dynamic process continually being constructed and reconstructed.

From a sociological perspective, Gustafson (2001) presents the construction of place as being an interplay between the self, environment, and others. He also refers to the destruction of a sense of place and locality through the global community we inhabit in modern times. Also taking a sociological perspective, Charlton, Wyse, Cliff-Hodges, Nikolajeva, Pointon and Taylor (2011) consider that place identity research needs interdisciplinary thinking. Their research focusses on children’s expression of their place-related identities through reading and writing. Similar to Tuan’s (1977) notion of space as movement and place as pause, Charlton *et al* (2011) describe place as an event and space as interaction. It is suggested that identity cannot simply be tied to a place, but that place itself needs to be recognised as a process in the context of modern globalisation. The social interactions of people within a place define its unique identities and histories, whilst place and identity are a combination of ‘lived existence and social construct’ (Charlton *et al*, 2011, p. 65).

Another relevant discipline to the concept of place identity is that of architecture. Dudek (2000) suggests that considering the importance of education within society, the role of the school architect should be of equal importance. He talks about his personal experience of school consisting of being taught in temporary classrooms. This gave a sense of impermanence, which links to one of Breakwell's (1986) principles of place identity – continuity. Breakwell (1986) argues that continuity is essential to maintaining a positive sense of place identity. School architects have recognised to some extent the impact of place identity on designing a good school. For example, Dudek (2000, p. 5) mentions the influential school buildings of Hertzberger in the 1980's which were designed with the aim of facilitating 'social interaction, rather than autonomous isolation'.

Suggestions and findings from research outside of psychology will be referred to throughout this thesis as it is important to recognise the relevance of this research to the psychological construct of place identity. Even within psychology though, there are several interpretations of this concept. Proshansky *et al* (1995) define place identity as consisting of our cognitions about the places in which we spend our time, giving rise to feelings, attitudes, values and beliefs associated with those places. Lewicka (2011) presents an extensive review of research conducted in the related concept of place attachment and considers how research focussing on people's relationships with place often do not agree on one single definition of place-related terms, leading to confusion as to which term refers to which concept. Within this thesis the term 'place identity' will be used and this will be defined as people's attachment to a place in which they spend time, the cognitions and emotions that they have about that place, and how they integrate this sense of place identity into their self-identity as a whole. However before looking at the research specifically focussed on place identity within schools, it is first necessary to explore other concepts such as self-identity and attachment in order to have a fuller understanding of how place identity relates to wider psychological theories.

1.1 Self-identity

There are several different theories that attempt to explain the construction of self-identity. Social construction identity theory suggests that we actively construct our own identities through every day social interactions and that our identities are dynamic and open to change (Phoenix, 2007). This fits with the overall perspective of social constructionism, which claims that our knowledge of the world is not a direct perception of reality (Burr, 2003). Instead social constructionism suggests that all knowledge is constructed between people in social interactions. It follows that our knowledge of our own identity must then also be constructed through the process of social interactions. Kaposi's (2011) research contributes to the idea of the constructionist view of identity by suggesting that, rather than there being different levels of self-identity, in fact all the aspects of our holistic identity are mutually constitutive of each other.

By viewing our self-identity as something that is dynamically constructed through our interactions with the world and other people in society, we accept that there are many factors which contribute to our sense of self-identity and that these are not fixed, but different factors may fluctuate and become more or less influential over time. Place is one of these many factors (Gergen, 1991). Meanings associated with particular places are negotiated through social interaction and these become incorporated into the construction of our identity.

In addition to identifying ourselves as independent individuals, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978) considers that we must each identify with a social group, in which we see ourselves as being similar to others within the same group and different to everyone outside of that social group. This suggests an explanation for why prejudice can often occur between groups. We see ourselves as being part of an in-group where all the members share similar characteristics to ourselves. Anyone who is not part of the in-group is necessarily a part of a different group – an out group. Fear of others from different social groups can lead to prejudice and discrimination (Watson, 2008). However we do not identify only with one group. Lawler (2008) extends the idea of Social Identity Theory by considering that, as everyone must identify with more than one social group or category (all of which are constructed through different norms of

social interaction), they must necessarily have more than one identity. As suggested by Kaposi (2011), Lawler (2008) also considers that these different aspects of our identity as a whole are not additive, but are instead mutually constitutive of each other, for example gender identity, class identity, and place identity.

Proshansky *et al* (1995, p.88) state that ‘self can be thought of as a term which describes the individual as a total system including both conscious and unconscious perceptions of his past, his daily experiences and behaviours and his future aspirations’. They suggest that a more focussed sub-structure of self is the concept of self-identity. Mead’s (1934; cited in Proshansky *et al*, 1995, p. 88) theory of self-identity emphasises ‘the individual as a member of the social world in which the development of a sense of self is rooted in the assimilation and acceptance of a commonly shared set of beliefs, rules, values and expectancies.’ Proshansky *et al* (1995, p.89) consider that an individual’s sense of self-identity is not fixed, but is rather ‘characterised by growth and change in response to a changing physical and social world’. This idea shares similarities with the transactional model of development suggested by Sameroff (1995), where both individuals and their environment are changing, and individuals have an effect on their environment as well as their environment having an effect on them.

1.2 Attachment to places

It may appear that it is a big leap from self-identity to attachment as attachment in psychological terms is usually thought of as being between people, particularly in association with mother and child relationships. The influential work of John Bowlby (1966; cited in Gabb, 2008, p.21) for example argues that a secure attachment between infant and care giver is essential to building a positive sense of self in later life. However there is also the concept of attachment between people and material objects (McFall, 2008). The theory of place identity attempts to describe how our attachment to the physical environment is related to our overall sense of self. McFall’s theory maintains that a sense of place helps us to make sense of the world as a whole and the social meanings that we construct in association with places mediate between us and the material world, implying that the way in which we experience place is in fact the way in which we experience our world.

Redman (2008) describes attachment as ‘the fact or condition of being attached by sympathy, affection, devotion, fidelity.’ The emotional investment that forms this type of attachment can be applied equally to the connections between people and between people and objects. Material objects are used to mediate between our selves and our social interactions with others. Objects take on meanings in social contexts to enable people to interact successfully and to share social meanings and practices. The concept of attachment as a social connection between people and objects can be extended to think about the attachments which people have to their physical environments. Although clearly objects and places are unable to reciprocate or initiate attachments, Redman’s theory implies that people must associate material objects and physical environments with attachment emotions.

McFall (2008) argues that our social interactions are shaped by our physical environment and mediated by material objects, making it difficult to imagine a social interaction that is not mediated by the environment in which it occurs. The type of attachment which people have to a particular location and the social norms that they associate with that place can affect the way in which they conduct themselves as a certain type of individual in certain situations (Burke and Stets, 2009). For example, a woman may have different roles as a mother, a student, and a friend. Which role she inhabits at a particular time will affect how she conducts herself, and particular types of conduct are encouraged in particular locations, such as being a mother on the school playground at home time, or a student whilst in a lecture at university. These roles are not mutually exclusive and may occur simultaneously, but some roles are more likely to be assumed in certain physical environments than others.

As mentioned in the Introduction, familiarity with and regular visits to particular spaces may lead to the formation of feelings and meanings associated with that space, thus forming a place attachment. For environments in which we spend a great deal of our time, such as our home, our school, or our work place, place attachment theory argues that we attempt to make the place our own as we transform the space into a place with associated social meanings (Cresswell, 2004). This is often achieved through the use of material objects, such as family photos displayed on a work desk or on the mantelpiece at home. In schools, teachers attempt to create this for their class

by producing wall displays containing work by the pupils, personalising the space and giving it meaning as a place of learning.

Ireson and Hallam (2005) conducted research which looked at pupils' liking for school. Although Ireson and Hallam (2005) focussed on whether there was an impact on pupils' liking for school depending on ability groupings used within the school, they also considered pupils' sense of belonging to the school and highlighted the need for affective aspects of learning to be taken into account when attempting to raise educational achievement within schools. This is relevant to place identity theory because if, as is suggested in place identity research conducted within schools (Loxley *et al*, 2011), pupils' sense of place has an impact on their liking for school, it is also possible that this could be a factor in academic achievement.

A recent study by Edgerton *et al* (2011) considered how students' perceptions of their school environments can have an effect on their educational achievement. This study collected data across three different year groups of students from seven secondary schools in Scotland. The findings indicated a relationship between students' perceptions of their physical school environment and their educational outcomes. Edgerton *et al* (2011, p.43) suggest that 'students that have more positive perceptions of their school environment are less likely to have difficulties interacting with the school environment, have fewer concerns about security, are less likely to perform negative behaviours, are more likely to 'engage' with the school and have higher academic and global self-esteem.' This study supports my premise that place identity is important to children's overall well-being and future prospects.

An extensive review of place-related research conducted over the last 40 years has been produced by Lewicka (2011). Although Lewicka (2011) focusses on research in place attachment, this has a great deal of overlap with research conducted on place identity because of the lack of agreed definition within the field. As it is a relatively new field of research, this is likely to become less problematic as more research is done and accepted definitions for different terms become available for use. Hernandez, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace and Hess (2007) helpfully provide a description of the difference between the concepts of place attachment and place identity. Hernandez *et al* (2007, p. 310) define place attachment as being 'an affective bond that people

establish with specific areas where they prefer to remain and where they feel comfortable and safe.’ Place identity on the other hand is an integral component to our self-identity. It is a process by which people identify themselves as belonging to a particular place and this process is developed through the interaction of people with places in which they spend time (Hernandez *et al*, 2007). Although this thesis refers to place attachment at times, it focuses on the concept of place identity and the factors which contribute to a sense of place identity for pupils within schools.

1.3 Place identity

Proshansky *et al* (1995) consider that there is a concept termed ‘place identity’ which they describe as an aspect of self-identity consisting of the cognitions about the physical environment in which the individual lives or regularly spends time. They suggest that out of an individual’s experience of their physical world will emerge particular values, attitudes, feelings and beliefs about the physical world. Clark (2010) suggests that children’s self-identity is intrinsically linked to their sense of place identity. She considers that an understanding of their relationship with the physical environment is essential for the child to establish their notion of themselves as a distinct self.

Despite Proshansky *et al*’s (1995) explanation of place identity as an aspect of our holistic self-identity, there are weaknesses with this theory. From an empirical point of view, there has not been a great deal of research conducted to validate Proshansky *et al*’s place identity theory and Hauge (2007) suggests that much of the current research on place identity uses Proshansky *et al*’s theory as a starting point rather than as a developed theoretical framework. Sarbin (2005; cited in Taylor, 2010) also criticised the initial theory of place identity proposed by Proshansky *et al* as he felt that there was no underlying principle of organisation for the cognitions which were claimed to make up this concept. Sarbin suggested that a narrative was needed in order to produce a coherent sense of self.

Although Sarbin (2005; cited in Taylor, 2010) considers that there is a need for a connective narrative to incorporate place into self-identity, he sees this as a largely unconscious process. Place is generally considered to be simply a background for

social interactions. Proshansky *et al* (1995) suggest that this ‘not in awareness’ property of place identity is an important feature of its role in influencing the behaviour and experiences of each individual.

Dixon and Durrheim (2000) explored the relocation of place identity from within the mind of the individual to the dialogic interactions that occur between individuals, suggesting that this better acknowledges the way we experience place through language. Dixon and Durrheim’s (2000) study focused on a research program in South Africa in which they conducted textual analysis to examine the changing landscape of the new South Africa. They critically evaluate previous work on place identity and argue that, whilst this work has been valuable in raising awareness of the importance of place for our sense of self, there are limitations which need to be addressed. These include what they see as the necessity to view place identity as a collective construct created through the social interactions that take place between people, rather than as a purely cognitive structure developed within an individual.

Extending Dixon and Durrheim’s view of place identity as a collective construct, Cresswell (2004) suggests that our attachment to place helps us to make sense of the world and to imbue meanings in society. He describes the world as being ‘a rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment’ (Cresswell, 2004, p. 11) and particularly considers that home is a very significant place in most people’s lives. However this can be seen on many different scales. For example, we can identify with our home planet, our home country, or our home town, as well as the more obvious description of home as the dwelling in which we live. So place identity can be applied to many different settings and locations, including the focus of this thesis – schools. However the current research around place identity could be described as being somewhat fragmented and therefore appears to be in need of an underlying theoretical framework. The following section will introduce Breakwell’s identity process model (1986), which is the theoretical framework on which this thesis is based.

1.4 Breakwell’s principles of place identity

The framework proposed by Breakwell (1986) was developed to further explore how and why place becomes important in self-identity, which is something that critics of

Proshansky's model of place identity claim he does not clearly explain (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). There needs to be more explanation about the factors that link place with identity and Breakwell's (1986) identity process model attempts to expand on Proshansky's model in this way by providing a theoretical framework for considering the relationship between place and identity.

Breakwell suggests that there are four principles of place identity which guide actions;

- Distinctiveness: people use place identification as a way of distinguishing themselves from others. In this context place functions similarly to social category.
- Continuity: place is linked to the development and maintenance of a sense of self.
- Self-efficacy: feelings of self-efficacy are maintained if the physical environment facilitates an individual's day-to-day lifestyle.
- Self-esteem: familiar, positive environments can support self-esteem.

(Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996)

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) applied Breakwell's framework to a study of attachment to residential environment in an area of the London docklands. They focussed on this residential area due to a large amount of change that had taken place there with regard to its social, environmental and economic status. They conducted semi-structured interviews with a sample of residents and, through content analysis, found that the results of the study supported the concept of place, in this case residential area, being incorporated into the development of self-identity. Although this study concentrated on a residential area, the four principles outlined in Breakwell's place identity framework would seem equally applicable to place identity within schools, providing an adequate underlying theoretical framework from which to conduct empirical research.

1.5 Place identity in school

Most of the previous research on place identity has been conducted with adult participants, with very little research in this area focussed on children. Overall there appears to be a distinct lack of empirical research on place identity within schools,

despite the potentially formative and influential role this concept plays in children's development of self-identity. School, along with home and neighbourhood, is one of the most important physical settings for most children and one in which they spend a great deal of time. It is also the place where they learn some of their most influential social roles (Proshansky *et al*, 1995). Rivlin and Weinstein (1995) support this idea stating that 'what is formed in school is a large part of people's sense of themselves'. Schools are a particular type of physical environment designed for a specific purpose; to educate and to prepare young people to become productive members of their community. It is in this environment that children learn the social norms that are expected of them. They learn behaviours that are valued and internalise this to take on the role of 'pupil' whilst in the school environment. The notion that children are socialised into conforming behaviours could be said to be controversial. However it should be remembered that schools are not solely places for learning; they are also places for socialisation and places which support individuals' psychological development (Rivlin and Weinstein, 1995). By taking a holistic view of school as a social institution, we can see that as well as educating children, schools also transmit the ideas and values of society, prepare children for adult roles and responsibilities, and foster children's individuality and development (Rivlin and Weinstein, 1995).

An important study in relation to my present research, conducted by Loxley *et al* (2011), draws heavily on Foucault's work and the Foucauldian notion that values are internalised so that 'we' are not actually aware of our acquiescence to social conformity. Although taking a sociological standpoint, there is relevance to my present psychological research in the methods and findings of this study. Loxley *et al* (2011, p.49) consider that schools as places have a wider role than education in the form of the curriculum and they state that 'the school as an institution is as much about the production and reproduction of a given social order (ie oppressive) as it is about forming and constructing a certain kind of human being' (ie productive). This suggests that place is instrumental in the development of self-identity through the social organisation associated with institutions such as schools. Sanders (2008; cited in Loxley *et al*, 2011, p.48) goes one step further and suggests that place is 'relational, in that it has no realist ontological status' but that its existence is made possible only by the social processes which define it.

Sanders (2008; cited in Loxley *et al*, 2011) goes on to identify school as a place defined by the institutional relationships (ie teachers, parents, pupils, etc.) underpinned by knowledge (ie pedagogical, organisational, etc.) which provides social norms about how school as a place should be used. Therefore how we perceive and experience place will depend on our understanding of these institutional relationships and our knowledge of the social norms governing that particular place. In turn these perceptions and experiences influence the development and maintenance of aspects of self-identity, the very construct that Proshansky *et al* (1995) refer to as place identity.

To be successfully maintained as a social institution, the school needs to recognise the importance of transmitting some sense of whole school identity to the pupils. By identifying with the school, the pupils incorporate it into their sense of self-identity (Bizumic *et al*, 2009). If this is a positive association, the pupils will value the school environment and will feel positive about being there. However if a negative association develops, the pupil may feel disconnected from the school, potentially leading to a negative effect on self-esteem, disengagement with education, and ultimately school exclusion. As an educational practitioner, I work within a Pupil Referral Unit which is a specialised school for children who have been permanently excluded from mainstream school. This experience has shown me first-hand that the negative effects of disengagement from school need to be avoided for pupils to achieve success within the education system. One of the reasons why research into place identity is so important at primary level is to explore the process by which place identity develops and the factors which affect this. Research into this process could suggest ways to avoid negative place identity forming at primary school, thus potentially avoiding problems, such as disengagement and exclusion, at secondary level.

The way in which a school learning space is laid out can have an impact on how children learn and how they feel about learning (Dudek, 2000). The physical environment of a good classroom can create a positive place for working and an atmosphere of success. Wall displays are one type of material device that can make classrooms seem more welcoming. If the students' own work is used in the display, this can give them a feeling of ownership over the physical environment, encouraging

them to associate with the school in a positive manner and form stable attachments (McCarter and Woolner, 2011). Dudek (2000), from a school architect's perspective, considers that children's work being on display is critically important to the classroom environment.

Despite being an important aspect of education and school settings, place seems to be a rather neglected area of research when it comes to educational psychology. This is recognised by Wyse, Nikolajeva, Charlton, Cliff-Hodges, Pointon and Taylor (2011) in their research on place-related identity in which they note the importance of the link between place and identity and the lack of research in this area, particularly in education. Loxley *et al* (2011, pg 47) suggest that place is 'inextricably linked to not only our sense of self and community, but [is also] a phenomenon which is constructed within and through our social practices'. They go on to explain further that our constructions of place are not purely to do with the built environment, but are also to do with emotion and cognition (how we attach meaning to space) and power (concerning the appropriation and control of space) (Loxley *et al*, 2011). This fits with Breakwell's (1986) principles of place identity because the meanings that we attach to places and the way we perceive the power relations within a place have an affect on our feelings of self-esteem and self-efficacy whilst in that place. In addition, our cognitive and affective constructions of place also influence how willing we are to distinguish ourselves as belonging to that place and how well the place supports our maintenance of self (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

1.6 Visual methods in place identity research

The study by Loxley *et al* (2011) explores children's perceptions of place within an upper primary school in Dublin. Loxley *et al* (2011) used a combination of participant generated textual, graphical, and photographic data collection methods to investigate how the participants perceived and articulated their sense of place in school and to consider the types of social practices and meanings that emerged within the school as a particular place. The findings of this study suggest that the pupils involved actively engage with their school as 'their' place and they maintain an interest in modelling adult space, such as the staff room. Loxley *et al* (2011) conclude that pupils have the

power, as much as the adults within the school, to colonise and ascribe meaning to school places through the social relations and interactions that occur there.

Another study which used visual methods to consider place identity within school was conducted by Schratz and Steiner-Löffler (1998). This study involved participants of primary school age being asked to take pictures around their school of places which they liked or disliked. These photographs were then used by the school as a form of self-evaluation, incorporating a strong sense of listening to the student voice.

Langhout (2003) researched place identity from the perspective of American community psychology using a mixed method approach to conduct a case study of a single participant – a third grade elementary school pupil. Langhout (2003) used place identity as a vehicle to showcase the mixed methods paradigm that she was promoting in this paper. She states that the substantive research goal of the paper was to ‘understand a child’s experience of place related to school’ (Langhout, 2003, p. 229). The study summarises the pupil’s preferences for places in which he has ‘freedom, autonomy, independence, and leadership’, whereas he dislikes places where he has ‘little autonomy or independence’ (Langhout, 2003, p. 242). An issue with conducting a single case study is that there is no possibility of generalising from this case to make inferences about any persons other than the participant of the study. This type of study could be useful for the institution in which it is carried out or for the participants themselves, for example if a school wants to find out more about the reasons behind a certain child’s behaviour in particular areas of the school to help them come up with strategies to deal with that behaviour and help the child. But there is no generalizability with Langhout’s (2003) study. However with place identity in education being a fairly new area of research, it could be argued that case studies are particularly appropriate to allow in-depth investigation and the production of rich data which could then lead on to future studies that are able to claim more generalizability.

Clark (2010), who developed the Mosaic approach with Moss (Clark and Moss, 2009), was involved in the Living Spaces project which conducted research into school design and encouraged pupil dialogue with the school architects at the design stage. Clark (2010) suggests that children’s physical and emotional environments are bound together and finds that there seems to be a strong connection between physical

appearance of the school and well-being. Clark refers to Tuan (1977) in a discussion about how place acquires meaning for adults by the accumulation of memories associated with that place, yet for children, who live more in the present and do not have such a store of past memories to draw on, perhaps the connection to places is made differently. This is something that is outside the scope of the present study but could be explored further in future research.

1.7 Summary of literature review

This chapter has explored the available literature relevant to the concept of place identity. From a starting point which explored the many different theories concerning the construction of self-identity, this literature review has described the attachment that grows between people and places, and how this seems to be incorporated into our overall sense of self. After explaining and considering the concepts of identity and attachment, literature concerning place identity was then explored, with specific regard to literature looking at place identity within schools.

The literature review found that there is a lack of research in the area of place and identity within education. The present study will add to the existing literature and could lead to further research on this topic. The intention of the present study is to explore pupils' perceptions and experience of place within school. Previous literature has found that this is important in the design of schools and is possibly linked to well-being, suggesting a need for more research in this area.

As stated in the introduction, the research questions which the study will aim to answer are:

- How do primary school pupils perceive and experience place within school?
- What factors can be identified as contributing to primary school pupils' sense of place identity?

Many of the previous studies discussed in this chapter have used child-centred methods for data collection, such as the visual methods which will be used in the present study to answer the research questions presented above. The next chapter will discuss this further.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

With a focus on using child-centred data collection methods and embracing participatory research, this chapter will describe the methodology behind the present study. One of the key points that make this study valuable is that the participants are primary school children, whereas the majority of previous studies have been focussed on older children or adult participants. Considering how place identity within school is first formed at primary school could give some insight into how to avoid negative place associations developing as the children get older. Other key aspects of the present study are the emphasis placed on listening to the student voice and the multi method approach, including the use of visual methodology.

The first section of this chapter will begin by exploring in more depth the value of visual methods as an emerging methodology which is ideal for conducting research with young children and particularly when investigating their perception of the material world which may be more easily captured in an image than articulated verbally. The second section will look at case studies, considering the potential dangers and benefits of these. The chapter will then move on to consider the semi-structured interviews used within the present study and the thematic narrative analysis utilised to analyse the interview data. The penultimate section looks at how children can be viewed as active researchers with a valid voice and opinions. Finally the present study and its chosen methodologies are discussed in depth.

The multiple methods used in the present study each aimed to contribute to answering one or both of the research questions (see Table 2.1). Multiple methods were used to triangulate the findings. For the photo elicitation interviews, both inductive and deductive thematic analysis was conducted. This was appropriate to the present study as the inductive analysis first identified the themes that were emergent from the interview data, generating a framework of factors which could be said to contribute to primary school pupils' sense of place identity. The deductive analysis then considered whether the data fitted in with Breakwell's principles of place identity, testing the theory with the hypothesis that these principles will be applicable to place identity within school.

Table 2.1 – Table of data collection methods in relation to the research questions

Research Question ↓	Data collection method				
	Diamond ranking activity	Ideal School drawing	Map of the school	Photo scrapbook	Photo elicitation interviews
How do primary school pupils perceive and experience place within school?	√	√	√	√	√
What factors can be identified as contributing to primary school pupils' sense of place identity?		√		√	√

Ethical concerns have been considered throughout the design of the present study and as such there is no specific section devoted to the consideration of ethical issues.

Instead, viewing these as integral to the research design and choice of methodology, the ethical concerns and mitigations of these concerns have been included within and throughout the entire methodology chapter.

The first section of this chapter will explore visual methodology, which has been an essential part of the data collection for the present study.

2.1 Visual methodology

Visual methods, often used within sociological research, have seen a rise in popularity within educational research (Langhout, 2003; Cremin, Mason and Busher, 2010; Loxley *et al*, 2011) in recent years. Visual methods are usually used alongside other methods in order to give a rich insight into the views of participants. In fact Pink (2005) suggests that visual methods are never purely visual and that they cannot be successfully used independently from other methods. In contrast, Prosser (1998, p. 1) highlights the importance of visual images, suggesting that we use images ‘not only as representations of the objective world but also to communicate our deepest feelings’. This quote illustrates the idea that visual materials can be used to access data from an alternative and rich perspective.

Visual methods can encompass a wide range of materials, including video recording, photographs, and drawings. These can be used as stimuli for participants or can be generated by the participants themselves. Visual methods are beginning to take on aspects of action research as visual method researchers become more focussed on change and participatory research (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008). Berg (2007) describes a concept called 'photo voice' which serves to empower and enable the participants within the research process and encourage productive dialogue.

The Mosaic approach (Clark and Moss, 2001) uses a mixture of research methods to listen to the voices and opinions of young children. Visual methods play an important part in this approach as they are accessible to young children without the ability to articulate their thoughts through traditional language-based research methods, such as interviews or diaries.

Some caution should be taken, however, when using visual methods within research to remember that visual materials do not show 'the truth'. Instead they show the co-constructed meaning formed between the producer of the material and the viewer (Chaplin, 1994; Gibson, 2005). This shared meaning is affected by the views and values held by the viewer and producer, suggesting that some awareness of this threat to validity should be maintained in the interpretation of visual materials. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2008) suggest that allowing participants to work in groups helps them to think in more depth about what they want to say with the visual materials they produce. However this also runs the risk that participants will be affected by others' viewpoints, thus not giving an accurate reflection of their individual views. For the present study it was decided to interview the pupils individually as it was felt that this would give them the freedom to express their views and opinions without the influence of their peers.

Ethical issues also need special consideration when using visual materials as visual methods can be intrusive to participants and create unanticipated or unintended trespasses on their right to anonymity more so than many other more traditional research methods. For example, participants can be easily identifiable if they are visible in photographs or videos, so confidentiality and informed consent are

particularly important when using these methods (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2008). Whilst informed consent should always be sought before a participant takes part in a study, in accordance with the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines, it should be ensured that participants are fully aware and give consent if pictures or video clips featuring them are likely to be seen by anyone other than the researcher. These matters were addressed in the present study and will be referred to throughout the thesis.

Clark-Ibanez (2007) conducted a study focussing on children living in an inner city environment, using photo elicitation interviews and participant generated images. The children were asked to take photographs which told stories about their lives and then they took part in interviews to discuss their photographs with the researcher. Samuels (2007) used similar methods to conduct two studies looking at children's experiences of Buddhist monastic life. For the first study Samuels gave the children a list of topics to take photos of and for the second study the children were instead asked to take pictures of things that attracted their hearts and minds (Samuels, 2007).

Visual methods are clearly ideal for data collection in place identity research as they instantly and easily capture details that would require considerable effort, particularly for young children, if such detail were to be described orally or in written form. Young and Barrett (2001), for example, used visual methods in an action research study working with Kampala street children to elicit information about the interactions they had with their socio-spatial environment. The research methods used in Young and Barrett's study were designed to be child-centred and to encourage autonomy, leading to minimal input from the researcher. The findings from their study concluded that the visual methods had contributed to encouraging child-led participation in the research, in conjunction with the additional verbal data gathered. This suggests that visual methods would be appropriate for use in the present study.

Schratz and Steiner-Löffler (1998), as previously mentioned in Chapter 1, conducted a study using visual methods to explore pupils' perspectives of their school environment. Prosser (1998, p. 4) describes this use of visual material as 'not only highly appropriate but also extremely effective', whilst Schratz and Steiner-Löffler

(1998, p. 235) consider that the use of photography as a research method gives pupils the opportunity to express the “inner world’ of school life without a lot of verbal argumentation’. Their study gives an interesting insight into the practicalities of conducting research using participant generated images.

The more recent research by Loxley *et al* (2011) (see Chapter 1, page 22) used participant generated visual methods to explore the way in which pupils conceptualised and represented space within their school. Cremin *et al* (2010) also used participant generated images to explore the views of engaged and disaffected pupils in an urban secondary school. The use of visual methods made it possible for these studies to consider the way school is viewed through the eyes of the participants. Aspects of school life which may not seem to be of significance to the researcher can be highlighted as being important to the participants through the joint interpretation of images. However there are other types of visual data that can also be used alongside, or instead of, participant generated material.

Prosser and Loxley (2008) consider that there are three main types of visual data:

- Researcher generated – visual material constructed by the researcher for the study
- Researcher found – visual material ‘found’ by the researcher and considered relevant to the study
- Participant generated – visual materials created by the participants for the study

The present study will use participant generated images as the main source of visual data to explore the pupils’ perception and experience of place around the school. If researcher generated or researcher found images were used, the same level of depth may not be achieved as the choice of images would be made by the researcher rather than the children participating in the case study. It is particularly important for this rich, in-depth data to be achieved as the present study is taking a case study approach and this is a distinctive feature of case study methodology.

2.2 Case study research

Case studies are often carried out when the researcher wants to focus on a particular setting, situation, group or individual in a great deal of depth. They do not intend to produce generalisable conclusions, but instead to provide a detailed insight into the particularities of the chosen case. The case in question may be chosen by the researcher for a particular reason, such as personal interest, a good example of some phenomenon, or being particularly unusual (Thomas, 2011). Case studies are ideal for looking at a particular case in a holistic way as they give the opportunity to explore in depth and to look at the case from all perspectives. Simons (2009, p. 21) defines case study as:

‘an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a ‘real life’ context.’

Stake (2005) however suggests that case study is not in itself a methodological choice but is instead the choice of what the researcher wants to study. In the present study, the case is a class of 9 year olds in a junior school. This is a local knowledge case, as the researcher gained access to working with this class through having contacts at the school and having already worked there for some time. The case study was designed to be instrumental (Thomas, 2011; Stake, 1995), with its purpose to provide feedback and suggestions to the school about how to improve the physical environment of the school to promote a positive sense of place identity.

Case study is an appropriate method derived from my research questions which are focussed on the concept of place identity. This is particularly context specific and it is likely to vary between every school to some extent. In order to be able to consider generalising from place identity research, many different case studies would have to be conducted involving many different schools. For the present study it is not necessary to generalise since it is an exploratory study into the factors which may contribute to pupils’ sense of place and there is the intention to feedback to the school participating in the research with school-specific suggestions for improvements that could be made in the future.

It is important that a case is defined by boundaries (Yin, 2012). These boundaries can be temporal, geographical, or institutional (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2007).

This is what causes it to be a case, rather than, for example, a sample of convenience. In the present study the case is a class of 9 year olds. It is one among many and this study is focussing specifically on the one (Stake, 1995).

Often in case study research, as in the present study, the researcher is integrally involved in the case (Cohen *et al*, 2007) so as to be able to gain a rich insight into the specificities of the particular case. Lack of immersion in the field is a potential danger with case studies because without this, the case cannot be studied in the depth necessary to make it a successful case study with productive and beneficial findings. In the present study the researcher was employed within the participating school as a teaching assistant for over a year before beginning the study and continued to work there throughout the research period. This ensured that an ethnographic approach could realistically be followed.

Another potential downfall of conducting ethnographic case study research is the possibility of interaction between the researcher and participant causing a change in the usual behaviour of the participants (Cohen *et al*, 2007). In this study, the fortunate position of the researcher as a teaching assistant in the participating class meant that behaviours were not modified by my presence.

A recent example of case studies with a relevance to place identity was conducted by Clark (2010), who completed two case studies in the Living Spaces project. This project aimed to involve children in the design of their learning environment right from the beginning of the process. One of Clark's case studies was a children's centre chosen because it was a recently refurbished example in which the architects had involved the children in the design process. Clark's other case study was a primary school, which was chosen because the architectural firm that was about to start work there had a good record of architecture for early childhood settings and was willing to engage with Clark's study. Although Clark (2010) was not working at either of the settings, she spent time becoming immersed in the environment she was studying in order to develop a fuller understanding of the cases.

The case study is a methodological approach, rather than a method within itself. Therefore it is necessary to decide which data collection methods will be best suited

to gathering the information needed to build a robust and interesting case study. One of the main data collection methods used in the present study was the technique of interviewing. The next section of this chapter will discuss this in more detail.

2.3 Interviews

Interviews are a common method used in social science research to gather information from participants about their views on the subject being researched (Drever, 2006). Cohen *et al* (2007) suggests that using interviews in research highlights the move away from seeing participants simply as data sources to seeing them as active participants in the generation of knowledge. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) portray interviews as being ‘inter-views’, describing the way knowledge is constructed through the sharing of views and the interaction between the interviewer and the participant. Without some connection between the researcher and the participant, it is unlikely to be a productive exchange of knowledge, particularly when working with children. There are different types of interviews that can be conducted ranging from the formal highly-structured interview to the informal unstructured interview (Drever, 2006). The type of interview method chosen by the researcher will depend on the nature of the research question and the type of analysis which is to be used.

For the present study semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews are able to combine the structure of a pre-conceived list of issues to be discussed with the freedom to follow up points of interest with additional questions throughout the interview (Thomas, 2009). This method has been chosen because, as a fairly informal type of interview, it is age appropriate for conducting research with children and it is hoped that the informal style will ensure the children participating in the interviews feel comfortable about expressing their views to the researcher. Drever (2006) comments that semi structured interviews are particularly appropriate for case study research as the participant’s perspective can be explored freely and in detail. Although Thomas (2009, p. 160) describes interviews as ‘a discussion with someone in which you try to get information from them’, it must be remembered that an interview is not the same as an everyday conversation (Cohen *et al*, 2007). The researcher needs to ensure that the interview is conducted in an ethical and

professional manner with the specific aim of eliciting the information about the area which they wish to research.

Establishing rapport is important for conducting interviews. As a current teaching assistant at the participating school, the researcher in the present study was able to draw upon the existing relationships established with the participants to conduct lively and stimulating interviews. However having an existing relationship with the participants also raised issues of power because the same person has to inhabit both the role of teaching assistant and researcher. Both these social roles have different expectations and will receive different reactions from the pupils. As a teaching assistant the researcher is an authority figure to whom the pupils are supposed to listen. But as a researcher there is more freedom for the children to express their thoughts and ideas without the restriction of conforming to the social norms expected of a 'pupil' talking to an adult teacher. It was important to be explicit in explaining this change of roles to the participants so that they were aware of this.

Semi-structured photo elicitation interviews were used in the present study. This involved the participants having their photo scrapbooks present throughout the interview and the structure of the discussion was based on the contents of this book. The technique of photo elicitation was used to stimulate discussion about place within school and to give the participants a focus for their answers. Cremin *et al* (2010) used photo elicitation interviews, considering this technique to be particularly suited to discussing issues of identity, in the same way as the present study. Harper (2006; cited in Cremin *et al*, 2010, p. 6) comments that photo elicitation interviews can be 'a powerful way of shifting power relations and re-defining the relationship between subject and researcher.'

It is important, as the researcher, that any deductions that I draw from the visual materials are valid and are interpreted in the way the participant intended. Barker and Smith (2012) argue that, when conducting visual research with children, the interpretation of images should always be conducted with the participants to make sure that the researcher understands the intended meaning of the photographs rather than imposing their own interpretive meanings, biased by their view as an adult researcher. By conducting the interviews with the photo scrapbooks present, it is

possible to ask the participants about the photographs they chose to take and the reasoning behind this choice. Croghan, Griffin, Hunter and Phoenix (2008) suggest that it is helpful for participants to be able to combine verbal and visual ways of presenting themselves as this gives them the opportunity to expand on complex and sometimes contradictory versions of their self-identity.

There are many ways of analysing interview data, but for the present study the chosen method of analysis for the photo elicitation interviews is thematic narrative analysis. Thematic analysis is, as claimed by Braun and Clarke (2006), a poorly acknowledged but commonly used method of qualitative analysis in psychology. The basis of thematic analysis is the intense exploration of the data to identify the themes within. Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) describe thematic analysis as moving beyond the words to describe implicit and explicit ideas within the interview in order to identify themes. It is a flexible method that can be used to make sense of complex data and provide rich insight (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic narrative analysis focuses on talk and finding the themes present within the dialogue that takes place between people (Taylor, 2009). The narrative of identity is important when looking for factors which may contribute to the participants' sense of place identity. The construction of self takes place through the process of integrating established social narratives with our own self-narratives (Lawler, 2008). This suggests that self is, as previously discussed in Chapter 1, a dynamic and changing entity, constructed through social interactions. Thus when exploring an aspect of self, in this case place identity, it is essential to listen to the social narrative constructed by the participants discussing their relationship to place within school. Emerging themes were first identified from the interview data in an inductive approach and then the interview data was re-examined to consider it from a deductive perspective, looking for links to the principles of Breakwell's place identity framework; continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.

A frequency analysis was conducted on the photo scrapbooks and thematic analysis was undertaken with the other methods of data collection; the diamond ranking activity, the map of the school, and the ideal school drawing. The themes identified

from this data were then cross-referenced with the themes inducted from the interview data, thus strengthening and triangulating the findings of this study.

A central feature to the data collection methods employed within the present study was the active involvement of the children in the creation of the data. The following section will discuss how children can be fully included in the research process and the value that can be gained from listening to their voice and opinions.

2.4 Children as active researchers

It is being increasingly recognised that high quality research about children is likely to be enhanced by involving the children themselves in the research process.

Traditionally children have been viewed as sources of data for the researcher to elicit information from (Kellett, 2005). However this view is now changing towards seeing children as potential co-researchers with the ability to interact with the research process in a meaningful way. Enabling children to actively participate in research relevant to them offers an opportunity for them to engage with the topic area and generate their own data (Kellett, 2005). After all, if the research is about the views of children, who better to ask to contribute to the research process than the children themselves?

Of course there needs to be some guidance available to the children participating as active researchers, as research methodology will not be readily understood, particularly by young children. The ‘What About Us?’ project (Byers, Davies, Fergusson and Marvin, 2008) worked with children and young people with learning difficulties to enable them to feel included within their educational settings. The research project involved school and college staff, students, and university researchers all working together to design and conduct the research over a period of two years. This shows that it is possible to involve children in the research process from the beginning, where the children were asked to tell the researchers about their experiences in school, right through to the presentation of the findings.

Pupil participation in educational research should help schools to listen to the voice of their pupils. A culture of listening to the opinions of pupils can help the school to

develop and deliver an engaging educational experience. But there are issues inherent in the concept of ‘pupil voice’, which will only be discussed briefly in this thesis. The main consideration that is relevant to the present study is that the voice of the pupils is not one homogenous voice, but instead is made up of many different voices and opinions (Cremin *et al*, 2010). Consulting the pupils about their suggestions for improvement to places within school, which will hopefully follow from the identification of factors which contribute to the pupils’ positive sense of place identity within school, acknowledges their right to be included in decisions that may affect their daily lifestyle (Ravet, 2007). However a fine balance needs to be struck to combine the needs of the pupils with the practicalities of suggesting school improvements. How this was achieved in the present study is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

2.5 The present study

The school, in which the present study was conducted, is a mixed gender Church of England junior school with pupils in the age range between 7 – 11 years (Years 3 – 6). It is located on an estate within a semi-rural town and there are around 313 pupils on roll with three forms per year. The proportion of pupils at the school with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) is classed as above average. This junior school in England was chosen to participate in this research as, whilst there has been little research overall on place identity within schools, there has been a tendency for the existing research to focus on older children in the secondary school stage. The two studies discussed in the literature review that were conducted with primary age children were in Ireland and America, so this present study hopes to expand the existing literature by focussing on younger children within an English school.

The research questions which the present study aimed to answer were:

- How do primary school pupils perceive and experience place within school?
- What factors can be identified as contributing to primary school pupils' sense of place identity?

The case study class consisted of 21 children, aged 9 years old, multi ethnic, and including 10 boys and 11 girls. Child-centred visual methodologies were used to explore the relationship between place and identity in school.

The methods used for data collection consisted of:

- Diamond ranking activity
- Map of the school
- Ideal school drawing
- Photo scrapbooks
- Photo elicitation interviews

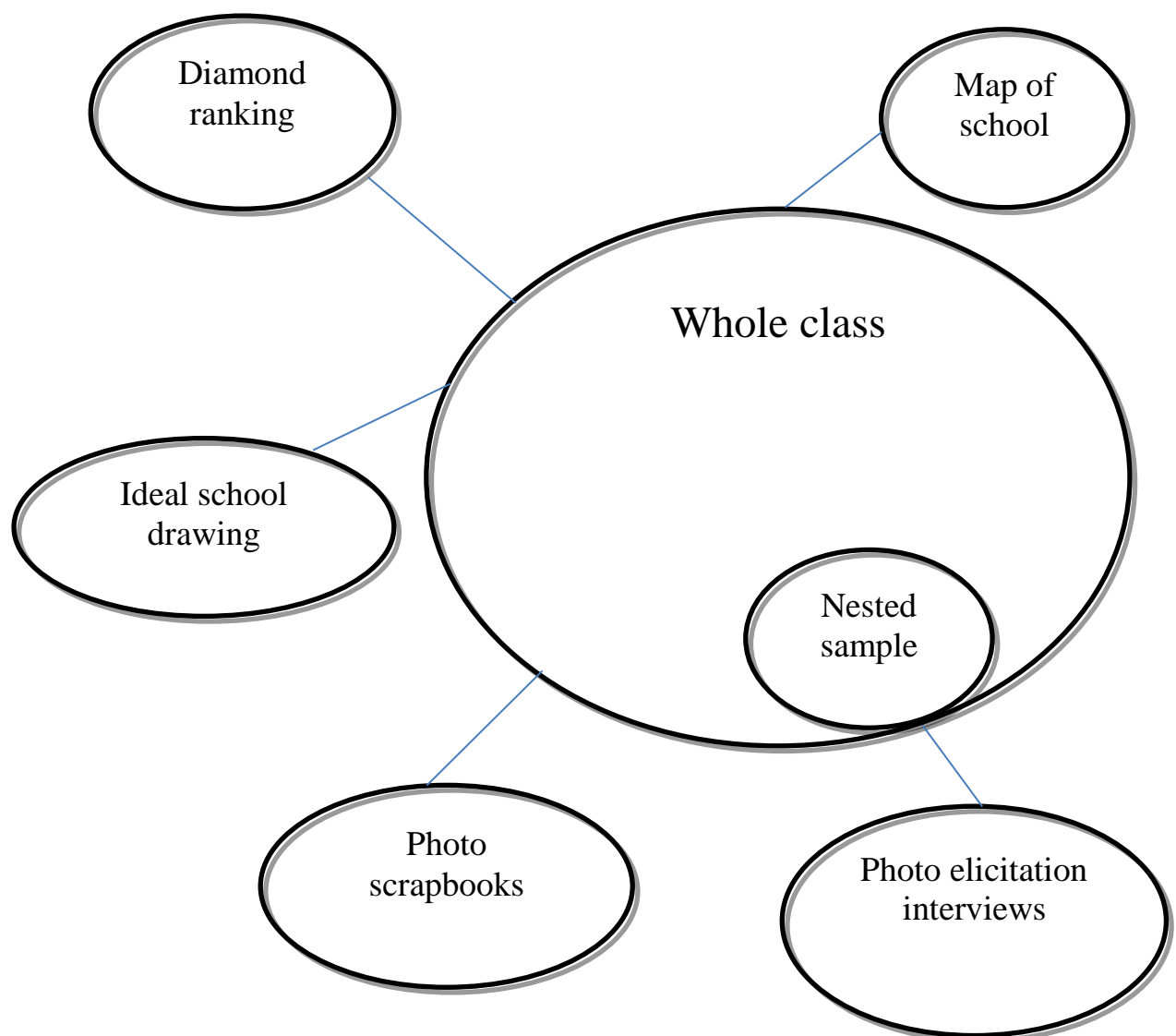
The production of the photo scrapbooks involved the children each being given a digital camera and asked to take photographs around their school of places (inside or outside) that they particularly liked or disliked, or that they felt were important to them in some way, with the purpose of producing a photo scrapbook to articulate their experience of place within school. This is very similar to the research method used by Cremin *et al* (2010), but with a more focussed approach to looking specifically at place. The resulting data are comprised of participant-generated images, generated by the research participants purposely for this study.

A sample of four pupils, consisting of two boys and two girls, was then chosen in consultation with the class teacher. These pupils were chosen as it was thought that they would enjoy and benefit from their involvement in the study and would be representative of the class as a whole. This nested sample of four pupils was asked to take part in semi-structured photo-elicitation interviews, using their photo scrapbooks to explore through dialogue the relation between their sense of place and self-identity. The photo elicitation interviews were semi-structured so as to allow the participants freedom to follow their train of thought and the researcher freedom to ask further questions on interesting points. Rather than attempting to devise questions which explicitly asked the participants about self-identity, instead the photo scrapbooks produced by the participants were used to guide the interview so that it was more of a discussion with the pupil about their intentions and interpretations of the photographs that they took. This approach was chosen because the notion of place and self-identity is rather abstract so it may have been difficult to ask the children to fully articulate

their understanding of these concepts. This approach also avoided the concern that the children may have tried to tailor their answers to say what they thought the researcher was interested in, rather than answering freely. The link between the discussions about place within school and self-identity became clearer in the subsequent thematic narrative analysis of the interview data.

Other methods, as mentioned earlier in this section, were used to triangulate the findings and supplement the data gathered from the photo scrapbooks and photo elicitation interviews (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2.1 - Diagram of data collection methods used



The first activity which was conducted with the class as a whole was a diamond ranking activity. This was chosen as a good introduction for the children and encouraged them to think about the concept of place within school. The activity involved a set of nine photographs of places around the school, taken by children from another class as part of a similar project during the previous summer term. The photos showed different locations around the school, such as the playground, a classroom, and the dining hall. The pupils worked in groups of three or four and each group was given a diamond nine grid on an A3 piece of paper. They were asked to rank the photographs for various different categories, such as 'places you feel happy', 'places you feel safe' and 'places to make new friends' (see Appendix 2 for example). Clark (2009) conducted a study for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme which followed a similar format to this activity, suggesting that the diamond ranking activity should be used less as a measuring tool and more as a visual activity, encouraging interaction and dialogue between the participants. The pupils were also asked to rank places around the school for 'fun' categories, such as best places to land a spaceship and best places to bury pirate treasure. This was to make the activity more interesting to the pupils and engage them more fully in thinking about places around their school.

The participants were also asked to draw a map of their school from memory (see Appendix 3 for example), similarly to the methods used in Loxley *et al* (2011) and Young and Barrett (2001), and a plan of their ideal school (see Appendix 4 for example), as in Loxley *et al* (2011). As well as the thematic narrative analysis conducted on the data resulting from the photo elicitation interviews, a frequency analysis was conducted on the scrapbooks, which involved looking at which places were most photographed. A similar procedure was used by Cremin *et al* (2010).

Permission was sought, in accordance with the BPS and BERA guidelines, from the head teacher of the school and the class teacher as the gatekeepers (see Appendix 5 for consent form). Time was arranged, in collaboration with the class teacher, in which to conduct the project. Parents were informed by letter of the research project in which their child was going to be involved. The letter, which was sent out from the school to parents of all the proposed participants, included information about the

project and a reply slip for them to fill in and return giving written consent for their child to take part in the project (see Appendix 6 for a copy of the letter).

The project was explained to the children, making it understandable at their level, and it was ensured that they were aware that they were free to withdraw from the project at any time if they did not want to continue. It was hoped that this would be a fun and engaging project that most children would want to take part in. However alternative activities, in the form of maths puzzles, were provided should they choose to withdraw. Here too a fine balance was needed between finding alternative activities that would be educationally worthwhile and engaging, yet not so much fun that they distracted the participating children from doing the project. At the same time the activities needed to be attractive enough so as not to seem like a punishment for not participating in the project.

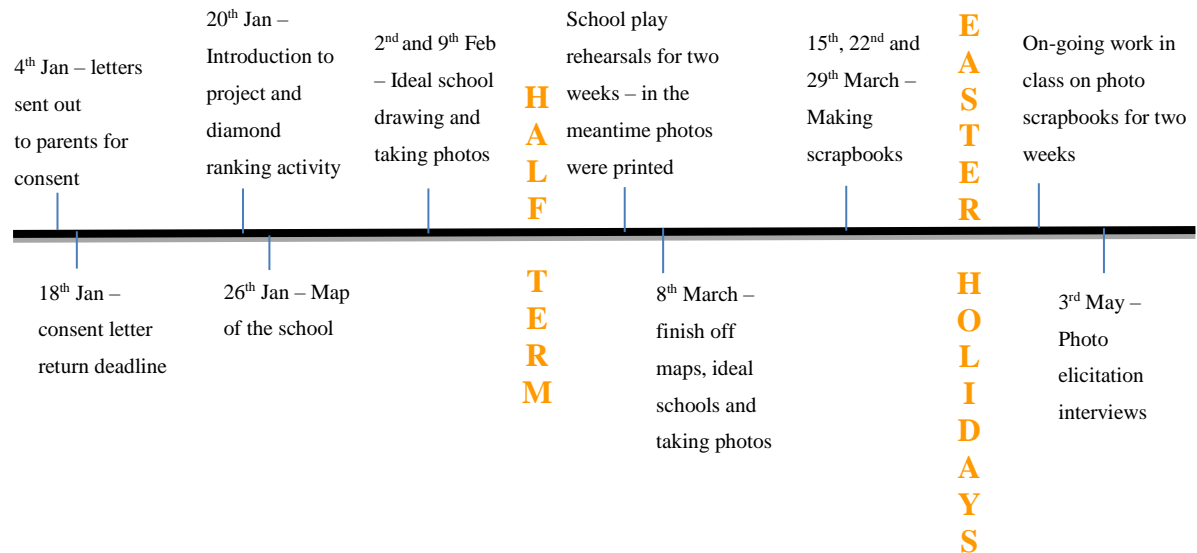
One pupil chose to withdraw from the project and did not want to take any photographs. This supports the premise that the researcher made it clear that it was voluntary participation and this student felt confident enough to inform the researcher that she did not want to take part. However later on, this pupil did change her mind and took some extra time to catch up with the other children in the project.

Each participating pupil was provided with a digital camera and a scrapbook. The researcher arranged and funded the development of the photos, as material photographs were chosen to make hard copy scrapbooks rather than using digital photos to make digital versions of the scrapbooks. It was felt that it would be better for the children to have something tangible to work with and also material photographs are easier to control access to than digital images. The children were asked to only take photos of places, with no people in any photos. This mitigated the many ethical issues involved in photos depicting children who could be identified from the image. It also helped to preserve anonymity for the individual participants.

The production of the photo scrapbooks and supplementary data, such as the ideal school plan, map, and diamond ranking activity, took around one day per week over the spring term. The interviews were then conducted individually at the beginning of the summer term after completion of the whole class scrapbook project. The

interviews were between 15 to 20 minutes in length, ensuring that the participants did not miss too much lesson time (see Figure 2.2 for research timeline).

Figure 2.2 – Timeline to show when activities for data collection took place



The option of withdrawing from the research at any time was reiterated to the children who took part in the interviews. Another letter was also sent home to their parents to inform them of their child’s participation (see Appendix 7 for a copy of this letter). Written consent had already been given for this as part of the reply slip from the initial letter. However this follow-up letter kept the parents updated and gave them the option to withdraw their consent by contacting the school if they had changed their mind. The children taking part in the interviews were also asked for written consent, by way of a child-friendly consent form designed to promote their active participation in the project (see Appendix 8 for a copy of this consent form)., based on ideas from the ‘What About Us?’ project (Byers *et al*, 2008). Although no harm was foreseen as being caused by the topic of place and identity within school, it was possible (for example, if there was a history of bullying for a particular child) and for this reason the school counsellor was asked if it would be possible for the children being interviewed to have the opportunity to speak to her after the interview about any issues that might have been raised for them.

At the end of the project, after analysis is complete, the scrapbooks will be returned to the individual children who produced them, thus recognising their ownership of this data and the collaborative nature of this research.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will present and discuss the results of the study, considering each data collection method in turn. The first section will look at the diamond ranking activity, as this was the first data collection method used with the participants, and the following sections will look at the maps of the school, the ideal school drawings, the photo scrapbooks, and the photo elicitation interviews, in this order. The final two sections will discuss the themes identified from the data and provide a summary of the findings.

3.1 Diamond ranking activity

The diamond ranking activity produced data for four categories: places to meet new friends, places to learn, places to feel safe, and places to feel happy. These categories were chosen by the researcher in relation to Breakwell's place identity principles;

- Distinctiveness: Places where people feel happy and safe are likely to be places where they feel a sense of social belonging.
- Continuity: People who feel safe, happy, and able to achieve are more likely to be able to maintain a successful sense of self.
- Self-efficacy: feelings of self-efficacy are affected by the capacity to learn and achieve, academically and socially.
- Self-esteem: Feelings of safety, happiness, and friendship can support positive self-esteem.

All the places chosen had to be located within the school grounds. These data were analysed using a frequency analysis. Every time a place was allocated the top position, i.e. this was the best place for this category; this place was awarded three points. For second position, two points were awarded and for third place, one point was awarded. Every time a place was allocated the bottom position, suggesting it was the worst place for this category, this was noted in a separate column with one point being awarded each time this occurred for a particular place. The results of this activity are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Tables presenting the results of the diamond ranking activity

Places to meet new friends

Place	Positive points	Negative points
Playground (inc. friendship bench)	21	0
Hall	20	2
Courtyard	19	0
Library	14	0
Viking ship play area	11	1
Jungle gym	11	0
Classroom	11	0
Green room (group work room)	7	2
Climbing wall	4	1
ICT suite	2	2
Foyer	0	4
Office	0	3
Toilet	0	5

Places you feel safe

Place	Positive points	Negative points
Library	18	1
Foyer	16	0
Hall	15	0
Courtyard	13	0
Classroom	12	0
Toilet	7	3
Outside (wooded area)	6	2
Green room (group work room)	6	0
Playground	4	3
ICT suite	3	0
Jungle gym	0	2
Viking ship play area	0	1
Cloakroom	0	1

Table 3.1 continued

Places to learn

Place	Positive points	Negative points
Classroom	38	0
Library	34	0
ICT suite	27	0
Hall	7	5
Courtyard	5	0
Outside (wooded area)	3	2
Green room (group work room)	3	1
Viking ship play area	1	1
Theatre	1	0
Playground	0	1
Jungle gym	0	1
Toilet	0	6

Places you feel happy

Place	Positive points	Negative points
Library	24	0
Green room (group work room)	15	0
Courtyard	13	0
Playground	12	1
Hall	10	0
Classroom	10	0
ICT suite	7	1
Viking ship play area	3	0
Jungle gym	3	0
Toilet	3	7
Field	0	1
Outside (wooded area)	0	1

The results of this frequency analysis suggest that the library is a valued place within the school, being positioned top as a place in which the children feel safe and happy. It is also positioned second as the best place to learn after the classroom. As seen from Table 3.1, the library was also positioned as the fourth best place to meet new friends. The culture within the school is particularly aimed at promoting reading and the library is the central area in which the children go to choose their reading books. The library is also open at break times and lunch times, enabling the children the freedom to visit this area in their free time as well as their allocated class library time. It is generally a calm and quiet place, suggesting that this could be a factor in the children's feelings of safety and happiness. There is a junior librarian scheme that gives the children the autonomy to issue and return their own books without adult supervision. Langhout (2003, p. 242) identified that factors which affected liking for place within school included 'freedom, autonomy, independence, and leadership'. These factors are present within the children's use of the school library and thus this could contribute to the children's liking of this place.

The frequency analysis shows that the toilet area is consistently allocated as being the worst place for all four of the categories. This is an area in which there is little to no adult supervision so it is possibly a place where the children may feel more vulnerable in regard to issues with their peers. However the toilet area also appears 7th out of 13 on the list of places to feel safe and 8th out of 12 on the list of places to feel happy. So equally perhaps there is a feeling of ownership over this place due to the lack of adult supervision, giving the children freedom and autonomy in this place.

The playground is also listed as the worst place for feeling safe. However it is the 4th out of 12 places for feeling happy. This is an interesting finding and further strengthens the suggestion that a fine balance needs to be struck between adult supervision to foster feelings of safety and protection, and giving the children the freedom and autonomy needed to promote independence and feelings of happiness.

3.2 Maps of the school

The maps drawn by the pupils showed that the most prominent feature in the majority of the maps was the current classroom. This is to be expected as the classrooms are

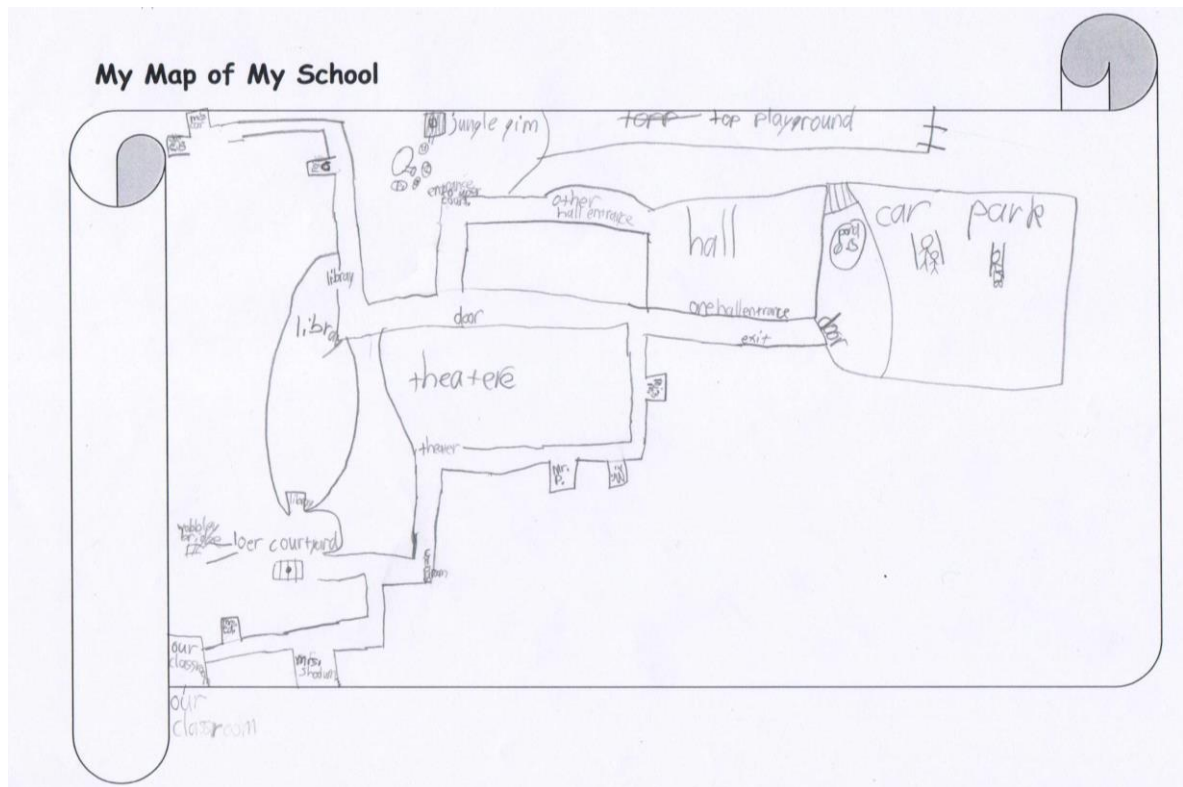
the places in which the children spend a lot of their time in school, and therefore are the places that first spring to mind as their 'base' within the school. Some of the children show good spatial awareness of how different places in the school are spatially linked to other places, whilst other children do not recognise this aspect of map making and simply draw the places that are most significant to them first, thus making them the centre of the map to which all other less significant places must be attached in some way. Many of the maps also included outdoor areas, particularly the 'forest' area which is a section of the field housing a small group of trees. This area is occasionally used in lessons due to the school's promotion of the 'Forest School' vision. Forest schools aim to inspire and encourage learning through the outdoors and natural environment (Archimedes Training, 2011). Therefore the outdoor space, particularly that of the forest area, appears to be of importance to the children.

Hutchinson (2007) considers that, for young children, map making is a way of representing the things and places that are emotionally important to them. By drawing maps of places they know well, the children are expressing their need to organise, make sense of and connect with their surroundings (Hutchinson, 2007). This gives an explanation as to why the children tend to draw the places that are most familiar to them in the most prominent positions on their maps. This links to one of the principles of Breakwell's place identity framework; continuity. Continuity is vital to facilitating an individual's daily life and the familiarity of places is important in achieving this. Familiarity in your environment also promotes self-esteem and self-efficacy, which are another two aspects of Breakwell's place identity framework (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996).

Two of the maps emphasised the fencing around the school and one featured a very prominent drawing of the road at the front of the school. Inclusion of these features suggests an awareness of safety within and around school. The school is situated on an estate within a semi-rural town. The children are generally surrounded by an urban environment, where there are incidents as in any town that could compromise the safety of residents. The children show an awareness of the role of the fence to keep them safe whilst at school and also recognise that it acts as a boundary between places that are within school and other places in their local environment. Road safety is taught at the school and remembrance of this is illustrated by the child who included

the prominent road feature on his map. A need for safety is the second level of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. By recognising that their school is a safe place surrounded by fences and separated from the busy road at the front, the children are aware that their need for safety has been met. For a table listing the most prominent features included on the maps, see Appendix 9.

Figure 3.1 – Example of one participant's completed 'map of my school' activity



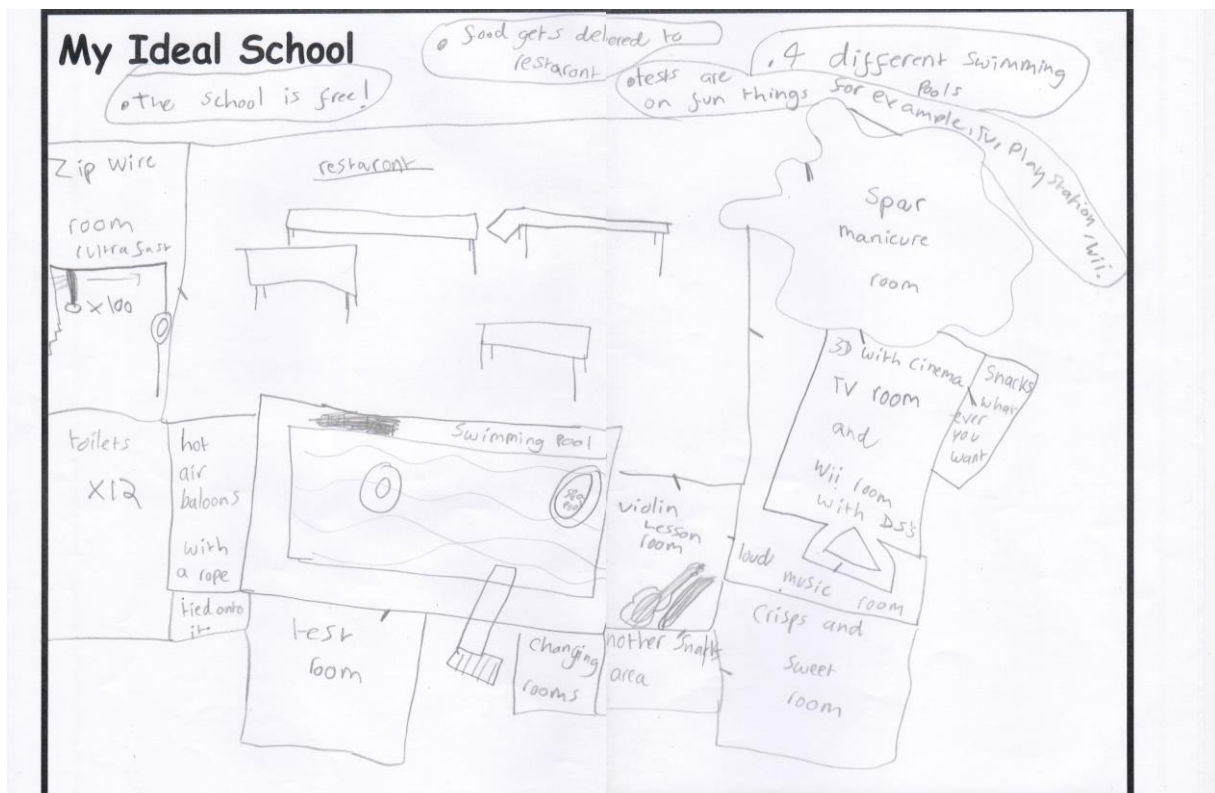
3.3 Ideal school drawings

Seven of the ideal school drawings suggested the inclusion of a swimming pool and one suggested an indoor playground for wet playtimes. This suggests that the children are generally keen to be active. Swimming lessons take place at age 9 in the participating school and so the memory of school swimming lessons would be fresh in the minds of the participants. The swimming lessons take place at a local swimming pool in the town centre which the children walk to with their class once a week during the autumn term. The desire to have a swimming pool within the school suggests a desire for convenience and ownership of their lesson resources. The indoor playground for wet playtimes suggests that this child dislikes the confinement of having to stay in the classroom when it is raining at playtimes, which is the current

practice. This means that the children do not get a chance to be away from direct adult supervision and that lack of freedom and autonomy has already been suggested as a factor in disliking particular places, so the addition of some form of indoor play space to be used in bad weather may help the children to form a more positive attachment to their classroom as the disliked aspect of their time spent in this place would be removed.

There were several references related to the theme of freedom. Some of the ideal school drawings directly mentioned freedom, whilst others had annotations that mentioned suggestions for school rules or even suggested that there should be no rules in an ideal school. It is interesting that the children are able to so explicitly recognise and express the central importance of rules within a social institution such as a school. The social rules, both written and unspoken, are what make the school the place it is and intends to be, facilitating the roles of teacher and pupil. The pupils' desire for freedom within the school is repeated here, as previously suggested by the diamond ranking activity and supported by the findings from Langhout's (2003) case study in America. For a table listing the themes and features identified in the ideal school drawings, see Appendix 10.

Figure 3.2 – Example of one participant's completed 'my ideal school' activity



3.4 Photo scrapbooks

A frequency analysis was conducted of the photographs included in the scrapbooks. The most photographed places were the library (19), the lower school courtyard (16), the theatre (16) and the current classroom (16). The least photographed places were the bins (1) and the toilets (1). See Table 3.2 for the full results. Observations of the children carrying out this task suggest that these were genuine choices, rather than simply a prescribed exercise, as the children were seen by the researcher to actively discuss and consider the places which they wished to photograph. The children walked around the school to take the photographs in small groups of 2 or 3, but each participant individually chose and took their own photographs.

Table 3.2 – Table presenting the results from the frequency analysis of photographs included in the scrapbooks

Place	Number of times photographed
Library	19
Lower school courtyard	16
Theatre	16
Classroom	16
Playground	15
Green room (group work room)	14
Field	13
Upper school courtyard	11
Music room	11
Hall	9
ICT suite	9
Foyer	8
Writing 'tree'	6
Corridor	5
RESPECT boards	5
Roof	4
Electricity pole	2
Bins	1
Toilets	1
Jungle gym	1

The library was shown by the diamond ranking activity to be a valued and liked place within the school. Every participant who completed their photo scrapbook included a photograph of the library, annotated with positive comments. Many of the children

identify the library as their favourite place in the school. Some of the comments illustrating the children's thoughts about the library can be read below:

"The library has more books than you can imagine. The library is my favourite place in school."

"The library is a calm place where you can read books."

"The library is my favourite place in the school because I love reading. In the library there are loads of brilliant books to read. The books are organised well so it is easy to find the book you want."

"There are over fifty books in the library. There are books for all sorts of ages. The library is my favourite part of the school."

"The library is a nice place to be."

The main improvement that was suggested for the library was that there should be more space and more books. An example of a typical comment is:

"I would improve the library by getting some more room for more books"

The lower school courtyard was the second most photographed place. This is the place in which the children spend most of their free time at break times and lunch times. This is also a place in which the children have a great deal of autonomy and freedom, with minimal adult supervision. At age 9, the participants in the present study are the oldest children in the lower school and this may give them a sense of ownership of the lower school play area as they will claim superiority over the younger children there by virtue of age. Interestingly the courtyard is also associated with reading. Many of the annotations in the photo scrapbooks refer to the courtyard as being a good place to read and be calm and quiet, as illustrated by the following quotes.

"It's great to read in the courtyard."

“Sometimes people sit on the benches [in the courtyard] and read”

“It’s a place for reading. It’s also a place for quiet.”

This is unexpected as it is generally assumed that children enjoy places where they can be active and noisy. This strong theme suggesting how important reading is to the children is an illustration of a culture which actively promotes reading throughout the school.

The theatre was photographed the same number of times as the courtyard. This place is generally used for assemblies, and for rehearsing and performing school plays. There is an emphasis within the school on the performing arts, with a strong school choir composed of both children and staff, a school orchestra, rock band, and a play being performed by each year group once a year. The children’s annotations, quoted below, suggest that they are aware of the importance of the theatre for their daily school life and generally view it as a place that they like.

“It’s a place for plays and work like one time I did a science lesson about forces. We also do assemblies in there.”

“The theatre is a good place to be. We sometimes have school plays in here.”

“The theatre is where we do all our school plays. It is also where the choir practices.”

Although the majority of the annotations associated with the theatre photographs are positive, there are some comments which suggest that the theatre could be improved, such as:

“This is where some of the best productions take place. I would like [the theatre] to be bigger.”

One child took a close up picture of the piano in the theatre and commented that;

“It is old and rusty.”

The children's current classroom was photographed the same number of times as the courtyard and the theatre. Some of the comments displayed by photographs of the classroom are quoted below:

"In our class we have display boards with conjectures and other maths information."

"We have a tree in our classroom. The leaves are mark making. We made the bark by tree rubbing. We painted the tree with paint and water mixed together. We stuck the tree rubbings to cardboard boxes. The branches are brown paper rolled up."

"The inside of [our classroom] has a tree inside."

From the detailed comments, it is clear that the 'tree' has had an impact on the children's perceptions of their classroom. The purpose of the tree is to encourage writing skills. When the children produce a good piece of writing it is added to the tree as a leaf. There is also a whole school 'tree' in the hall. This is used if the children produce an excellent piece of writing which is shown to the head teacher. One child wrote:

"If you do a very good piece of writing you get a leaf and it goes on the tree!"

The more familiar classroom tree seems to be more important to the children than the central tree, which is situated in the hall and was only photographed 6 times out of 18 scrapbooks. This suggests that the classroom as a place is valued by the children and the process of having their work displayed on the wall promotes positive self-esteem, which is one of Breakwell's principles of place identity.

Other interesting observations from the data collected in the photo scrapbooks include:

- One child included a photograph of the playground and commented that;

"The playground is a very nice place to be. But the thing about it is, it's a very rough place when the boys are playing."

This comment links with the findings from the diamond ranking activity which showed that the playground was perceived as being the worst place in the school to feel safe. Perhaps this feeling is perpetuated by the boys' 'rough' play and by the minimal adult supervision in place during play times.

- Five children included photographs of the banners around the school which depict the school motto, RESPECT, standing for;
 - Responsibility
 - Excellence
 - Spirituality
 - Partnership
 - Enjoyment
 - Care
 - Tolerance

Figure 3.3 – Banners along the corridor showing the school motto



“We have banners which tell our motto, which is R.E.S.P.E.C.T.”

This is positive to see that the children recognise the values encouraged within the school as being important to them.

- Two children included photographs of an electricity pole which is located within the school grounds. Prior to the present study being conducted, there was an incident involving the electricity pole being damaged and the children were strictly warned against going near it. Clearly this message had an impact as the children annotate these pictures with comments such as;

“WARNING! NEVER throw ANYTHING at this box!”

“Never throw sticks at this or it will explode.”

Figure 3.4 – The electricity pole in the school ground



The inductive thematic analysis of the photo scrapbooks identified three main themes;

- Achievement
- Freedom
- Friendship

There were also three minor themes identified;

- Nature
- Food
- Religion

The theme of achievement was arrived at through a combination of lesser themes which focussed on writing, reading, working, learning, and achieving. From the data in the scrapbooks it is clear that academic achievement is something that is valued within the school and this is recognised by the children participating in the present study. Their comments, as shown below, suggest that they understand the award systems in place for academic achievement within the school and are aware of tools that they can use to help them to learn.

“[In the ICT suite] there is a website called Right2Learn. It helps us to learn.”

“If you write something, [the head teacher] sees it and it goes on the tree.” – referring to the ‘writing tree’ on display in the school hall

“If you finish a book, you do a quiz and get points. You have a target and if you get above your target you get it raised.”

Educational achievement has been shown to be related to having a positive place identity, as in the study by Edgerton *et al* (2011) discussed in Chapter 1. It is also likely to improve self-efficacy and self-esteem, two of the principles of Breakwell’s place identity framework.

The second main theme identified from the photo scrapbooks was freedom. This theme was established through a mixture of lesser themes, namely freedom to play,

lively activities, adult restriction and direction, safety, and space. These themes were combined under the umbrella theme of ‘freedom’ as they all linked to the actions that are allowed or restricted within the school environment. The children appear to desire freedom and react well to places within the school which allow them freedom, independence and autonomy. Freedom and autonomy were shown, in Langhout’s (2003) study, to be factors that contributed to liking for a place, and therefore a positive place identity.

Having the freedom to play is important to the children. The following quote illustrates the use of imagination in making a place into a good place to play;

“On the field me and [my friends] play zoos and the dens are cages for imaginary animals.”

The freedom of choice is emphasised as being important, but the children also recognise that they are under adult supervision and accept the rules, which may at times restrict their freedom, such as in the following quote about the ICT suite rules;

“You can choose ICT for Golden Time, but there are things you are not allowed on because there are things you’re not allowed to see.”

Many of the improvements that are suggested by the children are focussed on the amount of space there is in certain places, with the suggestion to make places bigger and to extend the resources available in them, for example to have a bigger ICT suite with more computers;

“The [ICT Suite] is a fun place to learn. I want more computers.”

“I would improve the ICT room by getting more computers.”

The third main theme identified from thematic analysis of the photo scrapbooks was friendship. This theme was arrived at by a combination of lesser themes, including clubs, friends, and loneliness. Many of the children talked about their friends in the scrapbooks and also about the school clubs that they belonged to. This shows that

they have built important social connections to their peers within school and feel that they belong to this place. Loxley *et al* (2011) talk about the importance of positive social interactions in building a strong place identity. This suggestion is strengthened by the evidence from the present study showing the theme of friendship, focussed around social interactions and social identity, recurring throughout the scrapbooks.

The theme of loneliness was incorporated as one child commented on a photograph of the playground, focussing on the ‘friendship bench’;

“A place you can go if you are lonely.”

The ‘friendship bench’ is a scheme to discourage bullying and promote social interaction with peers. If a child is feeling lonely or does not have anyone to play with, they can go and sit on the bench. When other children see someone sitting there, the idea is that they will then go and ask this child to join in with their game. The scheme seems to work well within the school and is promoted as part of the whole school culture.

The three minor themes of nature, food and religion did not fit within any of the three major themes and were not on their own as prominent throughout the photo scrapbooks. However the theme of nature, including comments on the environment, recycling, trees, learning outdoors, and the school pets, was recurring throughout many of the scrapbooks to some extent. The quotes below suggest that the Forest School vision, mentioned in the results analysis of the maps drawn by the children, along with the general whole school culture of valuing the environment and exploring nature, has been taken on board by the children participating in the present study.

“The school trees are really lovely... I would like more trees in school.”

“I would like more trees.”

“We should use bins to keep Britain tidy.”

The minor theme of food was present throughout many of the photo scrapbooks, as shown by the following selection of quotes.

“The hall is a place for lunch.”

“The lunch hall is where I eat my delicious, yummy packed lunch.”

It seems that lunchtime and eating lunch are seen as significant aspects of the day by the children. Some of the children even wrote poems about lunchtime to accompany their photographs of the dining hall (see Appendix 11 for an example). The physiological need of our bodies to maintain homeostasis is the first level of Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs. Once this is met, for example by having lunch to satisfy hunger, then we can attend to our other needs such as feelings of belonging and self-esteem, both of which are related to place identity.

The school in which the present study was conducted is a Church of England school which actively promotes and teaches Christianity through assemblies and a general school ethos. The theme of religion was visible in some of the scrapbooks through references to the meditative assemblies held once every two weeks and the religious symbolism that is on display around the school.

Figure 3.5 – The cross used in meditative assemblies on display in the theatre



3.5 Thematic narrative analysis of interviews

Semi-structured photo elicitation interviews were carried out with four children, two boys and two girls, selected from within the main case study class sample. For the purposes of discussing the interviews, the children will be referred to as Alex, Fabien, Sophie, and Wendy. These are not their real names in order to maintain anonymity. An inductive thematic narrative analysis was carried out on the interviews. It was clear that the four interviews all had a different feel to them, as each participant emphasised the factors that were most important to themselves.

First, I shall discuss Alex's interview which was particularly focussed on suggestions for improvements to the school. Whilst he had many positive things to say about his school environment, he also clearly felt that there were changes that could be made to make the school a better place to be, as can be seen from the below quotes:

"the library is in quite a small space and it's really small and I'd like more room."
"the computers aren't super... I would improve the ICT suite by getting more computers and more stools. Some people have to stand up because there aren't enough"

Alex talks articulately about the good and bad points of various places around the school. He appears to enjoy being in quiet places with his friends and particularly likes the library, although he thinks it could be a bigger space.

"The library's my favourite place in the school because I love books."

Reading is a prominent theme throughout Alex's interview. He talks about learning from books and explains enthusiastically how the school reading scheme works. Achievement in this scheme is constructed as being important to Alex, as is achievement in the chess club and gaining a trophy to be displayed in the school foyer.

"There's only one lunchtime club. That's the chess club. I go and I'm one of the best in the school."

“The foyer is a place with lots of trophies, like in the picture I’ve taken of a really big trophy.”

Religion is another theme mentioned in Alex’s interview He says:

“Some people have meditative assemblies where we have lots of candles and it’s a quiet time thinking about Jesus. It feels really alive to be in the theatre in meditative assemblies.”

It is perhaps not surprising that religion is mentioned in Alex’s interview as it is an aspect of school life that is emphasises daily through group worship at assembly time and lunch time prayers. However it is pleasant to see how Alex appears to enjoy these opportunities for quiet time, especially as he comments that it makes him feel ‘really alive’.

The next interview to be discussed is Fabien’s. Fabien was extremely positive about all the school places we considered. He seems to be pleased with the amount of space available in places around the school, mentioning that the theatre is “really big”, “there is enough room for everyone” in the ICT suite, and the field is “so big”. Fabien talks about the classroom, theatre, ICT suite, and school field as all being “fun” places to be. The sole improvement that Fabien suggests for the school is to have a swimming pool.

“For a short time we had swimming lessons in [the town] pool, but only for five weeks. It would be good if there was a swimming pool here so there could be a club for it.”

Sophie’s interview is the next to be discussed and she appears to have a well balanced view of the places around her school. She comments on many of the places as being ‘quite nice’ and expands on this comment with reasons for her liking of these places, as can be seen from the below quotes.

“[the mosaic wall] is nice because it brightens up the courtyard.”

“The RESPECT boards are good because they are really nice drawings and they remind you of what RESPECT stands for.”

“[the group work room] is a nice place to work because it’s quite quiet.”

However she also suggests changes that she thinks could be made in order to further improve the school.

“New benches would be nice because they are quite old and sometimes when they get wet they are really damp and aren’t nice to sit on.”

“I would like [the theatre] to be bigger because it’s always a bit hard to get everyone in and it gets really really hot. They could make the windows quieter because when you open them they’re really noisy so you have to open them before the play starts, otherwise you’ll have a noise during the play.”

Sophie appears to recognise the importance of being environmentally-friendly and encouraging recycling. She has noticed the efforts that the school has made to do this, by ensuring that bins are available and putting up signs to encourage people not to litter, but she thinks that there is more that could be done.

“They have lots of bins around school. In Golden Time they have litter squad which is quite good. But they should have another bin on the playground because there is loads of rubbish blowing about.”

Finally, we come to Wendy’s interview. A major theme throughout the discussion with Wendy was safety. Wendy seems to perceive places around the school on the basis of whether she feels safe there. Many of her comments are about places in which she feels she could hide if needed.

“In the library I feel safe because there are lots of wall so... you can just hide behind one.”

“I feel very safe in the courtyard. There are lots of places to hide.”

“The playground is a good place to play but not a good place to hide... More play equipment would be good because it would mean more room to hide. I’d feel safer.”

Following this line of questioning, it came to light that Wendy was concerned that an unknown person could come into the school and this is why she made sure she knew where to hide. She felt that her classroom and the girls’ toilets were the safest places in the school.

Another recurring theme in Wendy’s interview is the need for adult direction in order to learn and achieve. When talking about her sessions in the group work room, she says;

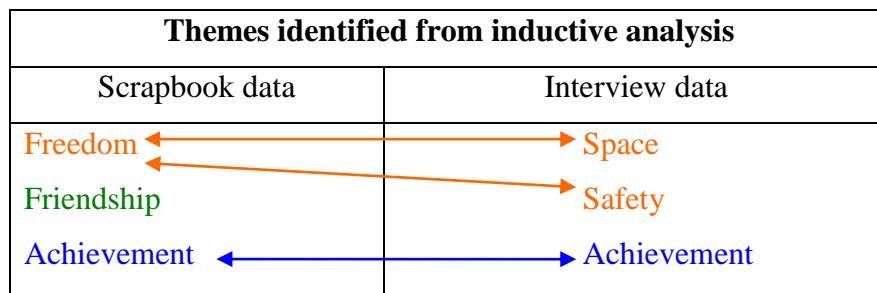
“Usually there’s a teacher there, but the last time there was no adult there and it was all chaotic. It’s a good place to learn when there’s a teacher there though.”

“[The classroom] is a very good place to learn because there are great teachers there to help a lot.”

3.6 Discussion of themes

From the inductive analysis, the overarching themes that appear to occur in all four of the interviews, to a greater or lesser extent, are safety, achievement, and space. The places that are spoken about most positively by the children are the places where they feel safe, where their learning is facilitated and it is possible to achieve, and where there is lots of space and freedom. These themes triangulate with the themes identified from the thematic analysis of the photo scrapbooks, with achievement and freedom being two of the major themes identified and safety being an underlying theme grouped within the overarching theme of freedom (see Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 – Diagram showing how the themes from the interview data link with the themes from the scrapbooks



Following this inductive analysis, a deductive thematic narrative analysis was carried out to consider whether the data fitted into the framework of Breakwell’s principles of place identity: distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. There were clearly aspects within the data that reflected these four principles.

- **Distinctiveness:** this principle refers to how individuals use place as a way of distinguishing themselves from others. Within the interview data, the participants recognise that their school has unique features and identify with these as a distinct part of their ‘place’.
“Our school has an electricity box.”
“The sun dial is a...nice feature in our school garden and flower beds.”
- **Continuity:** this principle is linked to the development and maintenance of a sense of self, facilitated by a reliable physical environment to which the individual feels an attachment. The participants demonstrate this principle by describing parts of the physical environment from memory and by talking about things that happen at the school and are expected to continue happening, such as clubs. The data suggest that participants know what to expect from their school environment and can thus incorporate this sense of continuity into the development and maintenance of their sense of self.
“I like the gardens and the gardening club. It’s a bit bare at the moment but it will be nice.”
“[the mosaic] is on the walls and it goes behind the first aid shed . It stops around the corner.”
- **Self-efficacy:** this principle suggests that feelings of self-efficacy are maintained if the physical environment of an individual facilitates their daily lifestyle. The school in the case study provides an environment in which the

participants feel able to achieve, both academically and socially, and they are enabled to complete the tasks expected within school, such as reading and writing.

“It’s a good place because it’s nice and quiet to read books.”

“It’s a good place to work because it’s quite quiet.”

- Self-esteem: this principle considers that familiar, positive physical environments can support positive self-esteem. This is shown by the feelings of happiness that the participants talk about from being in particular places.

“I feel happy in the classroom.”

“It’s a fun place to be when we’re doing plays.”

3.7 Summary of findings from the present study

The present study found that there were clear themes underlying the ways in which pupils perceive and experience place within school. The diamond ranking activity produced data which showed that the library was a valued place within the case study school where the pupils felt safe and happy. The toilets were consistently allocated as the worst place to feel safe and happy within the school, possibly due to the lack of adult supervision within this space leading to vulnerability around peers. The maps of the school suggested that the pupils feel ownership over their current classroom and view it as ‘their’ space. The ideal school drawings gave a strong impression of the desire for better material resources within the school, such as a school swimming pool and more computers available in the ICT suite. Within the photo scrapbooks a thematic analysis identified three main themes of achievement, freedom, and friendship, along with three minor themes of nature, food and religion. These triangulated with the themes identified from the thematic narrative analysis of the interviews from the nested sample of pupils, as is illustrated by Figure 3.6 on page 62. The three themes identified as recurrent within the interview data were safety, space and achievement. Achievement appeared as a theme in both analyses, and both safety and space were underlying themes within the main theme of freedom. The data was also shown to link well with Breakwell’s place identity principles of distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to present a case study exploring pupils' perceptions and experience of place within school. To conclude, this final chapter will give a brief recap of the present study, followed by a critical reflection on the process and outcomes of the study. The last section of this chapter briefly discusses the potential implications of the results of this study for educational practice and future research.

The research questions which this study sought to answer were:

- How do primary school pupils perceive and experience place within school?
- What factors can be identified as contributing to primary school pupils' sense of place identity?

Visual methods and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from a case study of one class of 9 year olds in an English upper primary school. The psychological construct of place identity was investigated through the research questions with a focus on the place identity which pupils form within school. The literature review in the first chapter gave an overview of the previous research that has been done in this area and related areas. It was clear from early on in the literature review that place identity must be viewed as cross-disciplinary, with input from fields as diverse as geography (Massey, 1991) and architecture (Dudek, 2000) as well as from within the social sciences. It was also clear that place is an important aspect of education which needs to be considered as a factor in both educational achievement (Edgerton *et al*, 2011) and engagement with school (Ireson and Hallam, 2005). Equipping pupils with the ability to form a stable and positive place identity can contribute substantially to ensuring that they have a successful and productive time within the education system.

4.1 Overview of the present study

After conducting a thorough literature review about place identity and the related concepts of attachment and self, the methodology for this research project was designed with the aim of finding out how primary school pupils in one particular class

viewed and experienced place. The thesis defined place as being, not only the physical school environment inhabited by the pupils, but also a social space in which social interactions and roles are formed in a dynamic interplay between people. Each individual associates meanings with particular places, leading to a transformation from physical space to social place. By choosing a case study as the methodology for this research, it provided the opportunity for rich in-depth data to be collected and analysed in a qualitative manner to gain a holistic view of the pupils' perceptions of place within school and the factors that appear to contribute to pupils' sense of place identity.

The study found that the pupils tended to express a liking for places that allowed them freedom and autonomy, such as the library. This supports the case study conducted by Langhout (2003) which also found that pupils preferred places within school in which they felt autonomous and independent. In the library of the case study school the pupils are given the responsibility of freely choosing their own books and independently using the library scanner to issue and return these, a task usually undertaken by adults. Having this freedom and independence promotes feelings of safety and happiness, thus increasing liking of place. The library was a prominent feature throughout the data collected, suggesting that it is a particularly valued place reflecting the culture and ethos of the school which strongly advocates the importance of reading.

The findings of the study suggest that there needs to be a fine balance struck between adult supervision, which supports feelings of safety within school, and freedom, which allows the pupils to achieve independence and autonomy. This is highlighted by the data collected about the playground. This place is perceived by the pupils as being one of the least safe places in the school but it is also viewed as being a place in which they feel happy. The mixture of adult supervision on the playground and the amount of freedom that the children have during break time produces these apparently contradictory feelings. Further research would have to be done, outside the scope of the present study, to look at why these contradictory feelings are caused by being on the playground. It is possible that the perceived danger of being on the playground is part of the aspect that makes it enjoyable as the children learn about taking risks and develop their independence.

Within the case study school there is a strong sense of the importance of ‘the outdoors’ within the school culture. The Forest School vision has encouraged many of the children to become more aware of and interested in their natural environment. This is evident in the ideal school drawings, many of which included a prominent outdoors area for nature. Trees are seen to be of importance to the pupils at the case study school, both as part of the natural world and as part of the reward scheme within the school. The reward scheme for writing is represented by a ‘tree’ in the assembly hall to which leaves are added with the children’s work on if their teacher chooses their piece of work as being particularly good. There are also classroom ‘trees’ for the same purpose. These are mentioned throughout the scrapbooks so this reward scheme appears to give the children motivation to achieve and also a feeling of ownership over the ‘trees’ as their own work is being displayed there.

The three main themes that have been inducted from this study are:

- Achievement
- Freedom
- Friendship

The findings suggest that these themes may be some of the factors which contribute to pupils’ sense of place identity within school. Pupils’ sense of place identity is more likely to be stable and positive if their school places facilitate their ability to achieve, present them with the opportunity to develop independence and autonomy, and give them the social connections needed to inhabit the social roles expected within the school institution. The data was also shown to link well with Breakwell’s place identity principles; distinctiveness, continuity, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.

4.2 Critical reflection

Through conducting this research project I believe that I have developed personally and have more confidence in my abilities as a researcher. On reflection, I consider that the present study was successful as an exploration of factors which influence pupils’ sense of place identity in primary school. There were however improvements that could have been made. For example, if I were to run the same project again I would change the time scale of the data collection. Rather than running the project for

one day per week over a full term, a more condensed block of time may be more appropriate. For young children, a week is a long time to leave between one session and the next. This increases the possibility that the participants may forget certain ideas in between time. As an alternative, the project could be run every school afternoon over a couple of weeks, thus avoiding this potential issue.

Although the present study was productive, there is certainly further research needed in this area. The place identity concept could be found to have significant implications for educational practice, as will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 Implications for educational practice and future research

The findings of this study have implications for educational settings because having a strong and positive place identity has been shown to create a stable attachment to the school setting and encourage engagement with education. It is vital that schools create an environment in which the pupils feel safe, happy, and able to achieve. By creating such an environment, and thus helping the pupils to form a positive place identity, the school can ensure that the pupils are successful both academically and socially.

This case study can provide feedback to the participating school showing that the pupils value the library as a place within the school, enjoy the opportunity to use outdoor spaces, and feel happiest when they have a mixture of adult supervision and freedom. The school could use these findings to inform future developments to the school building, such as a suggestion for an extension to the library or the addition of an afternoon break time to the school day; both of these proposals would be strengthened by the results of this study.

As this was a case study, the data cannot be generalised to other schools. However the methodological approach could be repeated and the themes identified from the inductive analysis could be used as a starting point for future studies. The evidence for the inductive themes of achievement, freedom, and friendship, along with the links to Breakwell's place identity principles, support the idea that primary school children do develop place identity within school. This could be used as the basis for further research, in which multiple case studies are conducted using the same methods and

research questions. This would create several cases that can then be meta-reviewed to explore the factors which contribute to place identity and recur at several different educational settings.

Future research could also consider the effect which transition has on place identity for pupils who have been permanently excluded from their original mainstream school and are undergoing the move to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or to an alternative mainstream school. It is possible that pupils who have been permanently excluded would have had an insecure sense of place identity in relation to their original school, and that moving to another school or a PRU could either result in a more stable place identity within school being formed in the new environment or that the pupils' sense of place identity will become difficult to rebuild following the apparent rejection from their original school. Following on from this hypothesis, it is likely that pupils who are able to form a stable sense of place identity in relation to their new school setting are more likely to be successful than pupils who find it difficult to re-establish this aspect of their self-identity.

I hope to continue my research on place identity within school as a PhD project, looking at the affect permanent exclusion has on pupils' sense of place identity within their education settings, as described in the preceding paragraph. The themes identified from this MEd study suggest a framework that could be used, alongside Breakwell's (1986) principles of place identity, as a theoretical basis for this future research.

REFERENCES

- Archimedes Training. (2011). What are Forest Schools? *Forest Schools*.
<http://www.forestschools.com/what-are-forest-schools.php>
[Accessed 08.07.12]
- Barker, J. and Smith, F. (2012). What's in focus? A critical discussion of photography, children and young people. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 15(2), 91 – 103
- Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. New York: Pearson
- Bizumic, B., Reynolds, K. J., Turner, J. C., Bromhead, D. and Subasic, E. (2009). The role of the group in individual functioning: school identification and the psychological well-being of staff and students. *Applied Psychology*, 58(1), 171 – 192
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77 – 101
- Breakwell, G. (1986). *Coping with threatened identity*. London: Methuen
- Burke, P. J. and Stets, J. E. (2009). *Identity theory*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Burr, V. (2003). *Social constructionism*. Hove: Routledge
- Byers, R., Davies, J., Fergusson, A. and Marvin, C. (2008). *What about us? – working with young people to make the best of school and college*. (Project website)
London/Cambridge: Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities/University of Cambridge Faculty of Education [online at: www.whataboutus.org.uk]

- Chaplin, E. (1994). *Sociology and visual representations*. London: Routledge
- Charlton, E., Wyse, D., Cliff-Hodges, G., Nikolajeva, M., Pointon, P. and Taylor, L. (2011). Place-related identities through texts: from interdisciplinary theory to research agenda. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 59(1), 63 – 74
- Clark, A. (2010). *Transforming children's spaces*. London: Routledge
- Clark, A. and Moss, P. (2001). *Listening to young children: the Mosaic approach*. London: National Children's Bureau for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Clark, J. (2009). Exploring the use of diamond ranking activities as a visual methods research tools. Presented at the 1st International Visual Methods Conference, 15 – 17 September 2009, University of Leeds
- Clark-Ibanez, M. (2007). Inner city children in sharper focus: sociology of childhood and photo elicitation interviews. In G. Stanczak (Ed.). *Visual research methods: Image, Society and Representation*. London: Sage
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. Oxon: Routledge
- Cremin, H., Mason, C. and Busher, H. (2010). Problematising pupil voice using visual methods: findings from a study of engaged and disaffected pupils in an urban secondary school. *British Educational Research Journal*, First published on: 21 May 2010 (iFirst) DOI: 10.1080/01411926.2010.482977
- Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: a short introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing
- Croghan, R., Griffin, C., Hunter, J. and Phoenix, A. (2008). Young people's construction of self: notes on the use and analysis of the photo elicitation methods. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 345 – 356

- Department of Education. (2011). DfE: Permanent and fixed period exclusions from schools in England 2009/10. *Data, research and statistics*.
<http://www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics/datasets/a00196834/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-from-schools> [Accessed 17.08.12]
- Dixon, J. and Durrheim, K. (2000). Displacing place-identity: a discursive approach to locating self and others. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 39, 27 – 44
- Drever, E. (2006). *Using semi-structured interviews in small scale research*. Glasgow: SRCE Publication
- Dudek, M. (2000). *Architecture of schools: the new learning environment*. London: Routledge
- Edgerton, E., McKechnie, J. and McEwen, S. (2011). Students' perceptions of their school environments and the relationship with educational outcomes. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 28(1), 33 – 45
- Gabb, J. (2008). Affective attachment in families. In P. Redman (Ed.). *Attachment*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Gergen, K. (1991). *The saturated self*. New York: Basic
- Gibson, B. E. (2005). Co-producing video diaries: the presence of the absent researcher. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 4(3), 34 – 43
- Goffman, E. (1990). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Penguin
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M. and Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Gustafson, P. (2001). Meanings of place: everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, 5 – 16

- Hauge, A. L. (2007). Identity and place: a critical comparison of three identity theories. *Architectural Science Review*, 50(1), 44 - 51
- Hernandez, B., Hidalgo, M. C., Salazar-Laplace, M. E. and Hess, S. (2007). Place attachment and place identity in natives and non-natives. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 27(4), 310 – 319
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. and Leavy, P. (2008). *Handbook of emergent methods*. New York: Guilford
- Hutchinson, D. (2007). Drawing on children's 'sense of place' – the starting point for teaching social studies and geography. *What works? Research into Practice: Research Monograph #10*. Ontario: The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat
- Ireson, J. and Hallam, S. (2005). Pupils' liking for school: ability grouping, self-concept and perception of teaching. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75, 297 – 311
- Kaposi, D. (2011). The crooked timber of identity: integrating discursive, critical, and psychosocial analysis. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, First published on 2 September 2011 (iFirst) DOI: 10.1111/j.2044-8309.2011.02074.x
- Kellett, M. (2005). *How to develop children as researchers*. London: Sage
- Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Inter Views: learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Langhout, R. D. (2003). Reconceptualizing quantitative and qualitative methods: a case study dealing with place as an exemplar. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 32(3/4), 229 – 244
- Lawler, S. (2008). *Identity: sociological perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford: Blackwell

- Lewicka, M. (2011). Place attachment: how far have we come in the last 40 years?
Journal of Environmental Psychology, 31, 207 – 230
- Loxley, A., O’Leary, B. and Minton, S. J. (2011). Space makers or space cadets?
Exploring children’s perceptions of space and place in the context of a Dublin
primary school. *Educational and Child Psychology*, 28(1), 46 – 63
- Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370 –
396
- Massey, D. (1991). A global sense of place. *Marxism Today*, (1991), 24 - 29
- McCarter, S. and Woolner, P. (2011). How listening to student voice can enable
teachers to reflect on and adjust their use of physical space. *Educational and
Child Psychology*, 28(1), 20 - 32
- McFall, L. (2008). Series Preface. In P. Redman (Ed.). *Attachment*. Manchester:
Manchester University Press
- Phoenix, A. (2007). Identities and diversities. In D. Miell, A. Phoenix, and K. Thomas
(Eds.). *Mapping Psychology*. Milton Keynes: The Open University Press
- Pink, S. (2005). *The future of visual anthropology*. London: Routledge
- Proshansky, H.M., Fabian, A. K. and Kaminoff, R. (1995). Place-identity: physical
world socialization of the self. In L. Groat (Ed.). *Giving Places Meaning*.
London: Academic Press
- Prosser, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Image based research: a sourcebook for qualitative
researchers*. London: Falmer Press

- Prosser, J. and Loxley, A. (2008). *Introducing visual methodology*. Economic and Social Science Research Council. Swindon: National Centre for Research Methods
- Puffett, N. (2010). Government clarifies ban on Every Child Matters. *Children's Workforce Matters*.
<http://www.childrensworkforcematters.org.uk/news/2010/aug/government-clarifies-ban-every-child-matters> [Accessed 24.06.12]
- Ravet, J. (2007). Enabling pupil participation in a study of perceptions of disengagement: methodological matters. *British Journal of Special Education*, 34(4), 234 – 242
- Redman, P. (2008). Introduction. In P. Redman (Ed.). *Attachment*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Rivlin, L.G. and Weinstein, C. S. (1995). School environments and environmental psychology. In C. Spencer (Ed.). *The Child's Environment*. London: Academic Press
- Sameroff, A. J. (1995). General systems theories and developmental psychopathology. In D. Cicchetti and D. Cohen (Eds.). *Manual development and psychopathology*. New York: Wiley
- Samuels, J. (2007). When words are not enough: eliciting children's experience of Buddhist monastic life through photographs. In G. Stanczak (Ed.). *Visual research methods: Image, Society and Representation*. London: Sage
- Schatz, M. and Steiner-Löffler, U. (1998). Pupils using photographs in school self evaluation. In J. Prosser (Ed.). *Image Based Research: A sourcebook for qualitative researchers*. London: Falmer Press
- Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. London: Sage

- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (3rd edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Tajfel, H. (Ed.) (1978). *Differentiation between social groups: studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations*. London: Academic Press
- Taylor, S. (2010). *Narratives of identity and place*. Hove: Routledge
- Thomas, G. (2011). *How to do your case study*. London: Sage
- Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project*. London: Sage
- Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and place: the perspective of experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press
- Twigger-Ross, C. L. and Uzzell, D. L. (1996). Place and identity processes. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, (16), 205 – 220
- Watson, S. (2008). Security in the city. In S. Carter, T. Jordan and S. Watson (Eds.). *Security*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Wyse, D., Nikolajeva, M., Charlton, E., Cliff-Hodges, G., Pointon, P. and Taylor, L. (2011). Place-related identity, texts and transcultural meanings. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, First published on 4 October 2011 (iFirst)
DOI: 10.1080/01411926.2011.608251
- Yin, R. K. (2012). *Applications of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Young, L. and Barrett, H. (2001). Adapting visual methods: action research with Kampala street children. *Area*, 33(2), 141 – 152

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Extract from school prospectus – RESPECT school vision

Appendix 2: Example of diamond ranking ‘Top 3’ activity

Appendix 3: Example of ‘map of my school’ activity

Appendix 4: Example of ‘My ideal school’ drawing activity

Appendix 5: Consent form signed by head teacher and class teacher

Appendix 6: Letter of consent sent to parents of proposed participants

Appendix 7: Letter informing parents about the interview process

Appendix 8: Child-centred consent form for interview participants

Appendix 9: Table listing the most prominent features on the maps of the school

Appendix 10: Table listing the themes and features identified in the ideal school drawings

Appendix 11: An example of a poem written by one of the participants about lunch in the school dining hall

Appendix 1: Extract from school prospectus, regarding the school vision

R.E.S.P.E.C.T.

We sum up the way we all are towards each other and any visitors in one word:

Respect.

We constantly reflect on what this word means to us in the following way...

Responsibility- We will be responsible for our learning and our behaviour

Excellence- We will strive for excellence

Spirituality- We will open our eyes in awe and wonder at God's creation

Partnership- We will work well together with each other, our families and the wider community

Enjoyment- We will make the most of our time in school

Caring- We will care for each other, our school and our world

Tolerance- We will celebrate our differences

Appendix 2: Example of blank diamond ranking 'Top 3' activity



List your top 3 places around your school and one worst place around your school for the following categories:

Places to meet new friends

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Worst place _____

Places to learn

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Worst place _____

Places to land a spaceship



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Worst place _____

Places you feel safe

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Worst place _____

Places you feel happy

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Worst place _____

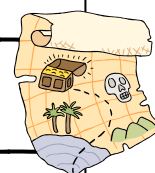
Places to bury pirate treasure

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Worst place _____



Appendix 3: Example of blank ‘map of my school’ activity

My Map of My School



Appendix 4: Example of blank ‘My ideal school’ drawing activity

My Ideal School

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing activity. It occupies most of the page below the title.

Appendix 5: Consent form signed by head teacher and class teacher (with name of school and class blanked out to preserve anonymity)

Consent form for Place-identity research project conducted by Laura Oxley

Head teacher at

I understand what this research project involves.

I give consent for the research to be conducted at

I am aware of my right to withdraw consent at any time.

Signed



Date

16/11/11

Consent form for Place-identity research project conducted by Laura Oxley


Class teacher of case study class

I understand what this research project involves.

I give consent for the research to be conducted with my class

I am aware of my right to withdraw consent at any time.

Signed



Date

9/12/11

Appendix 6: Letter of consent sent to parents of proposed participants (with name of school and class removed to preserve anonymity)

Dear Parents/Carers

I am currently studying for an MEd in Psychology and Education at the University of Cambridge. My research is looking at how children perceive and experience their physical environment within school and how this is related to their sense of self-identity. This concept is called place identity.

I am hoping to be able to conduct a research project with [name of school], including [name of class] as a case study class. The project will involve the children working in groups with a digital camera to take photographs of places around their school that they like, dislike, or simply feel are important to them. The children will use the photographs to produce an annotated scrapbook, which I hope will convey their sense of place identity within school. There will be some other introductory tasks involved in the project to encourage the children to think about places around their school. These tasks will include sorting photographs of places in the school according to different categories, drawing a map of the school, and designing their ideal school. The project will involve many of the skills that the children use in daily school life, such as working in groups, ICT skills, writing and drawing.

Some children within the class may be asked to take part in a short interview following the completion of the practical tasks. These will only last for around 15-20 minutes and will be scheduled so that they do not interfere significantly with the children's lessons. If your child has been chosen to take part in this part of the project, you will receive a letter beforehand to inform you of this.

Any data that is collected will be anonymised and no individual information will be recorded outside of the normal school context. I hope that all the children in the class will be able to take part in what should be a fun and engaging project for the class. Any child who does not wish to take part, or whose parents do not give consent to their participation in the project, will be provided with suitable alternative activities during the project sessions.

Please complete the reply slip and send it into the school with your child by **Wednesday 18th January**. If you have any questions about what the project involves or would like further information, please feel free to contact me via the school or email me on lo256@cam.ac.uk.

Kind regards
Miss Laura Oxley

I understand what the research project involves and give consent for my child to take part in this project.

YES ☐ NO ☐

I give consent for my child, if chosen, to take part in an informal interview regarding their work on this project.

YES ☐ NO ☐

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix 7: Letter informing parents about the interview process

27 April 2012

Dear Parents/Carers

Your child has been asked to take part in a short interview about the recent class project on places around school, which I have conducted as part of my MEd research at the University of Cambridge. Your child has been asked to take part, along with some other children from the class, because they have been involved in the project and completed all the tasks to a high quality.

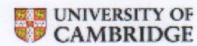
The interview will be very informal and will only last around 15 minutes. The purpose of the interview is to discuss the photographs that your child has taken around school with a view to encouraging pupil voice about the school environment. The interview will take place next week on Thursday or Friday.

If you would like more details about the interview process or the project in general, please contact me via the school or by email lo256@cam.ac.uk.

If you do not wish for your child to take part in the interviews, please let me know via the school office, by email or a note in the home-school book.

Yours sincerely






Miss Laura Oxley



Appendix 8: Child-centred consent form for interview participant

Project about school places at Ely St Mary's

Your Permission

	I want to take part in this project, discussing ideas about what makes a good place in school
	I know I can say 'NO' to the project at any time
	I am happy to share my ideas, with photographs and on tape
	I know that my name will not be used when people are told about the project
	I want to join in. I understand and agree to all the things I have ticked.

Name _____

Class _____

Signature _____

Appendix 9: Table listing the most prominent features on the maps of the school

This table shows the raw data gathered from the maps of the schools. Each row represents the themes suggested by one pupil.

Playground, freedom, classroom labels a mixture of teacher names and class names
Playground
Current classrooms and previous classroom
fencing, outdoor area, nature
safety, specifies only one entrance, room labelled 'our classroom' furthest away from the entrance, large theatre and small classrooms, classrooms labelled with teacher names
n/a - no labels or images to analyse
Current and previous classrooms, forest (tree area)
n/a - no labels or images to analyse
Mainly classroom based, labelled by class names
detailed classrooms
fairly accurate detailed map of the entire school
classrooms named by class names
current classrooms and future classrooms labelled but not previous classrooms, lots of outdoor areas labelled, including forest (tree area)
includes a school garden
n/a - no labels or images to analyse
guinea pigs labelled by name, road very prominent, classrooms labelled by class names
large playground, only current classrooms drawn
Outdoor areas, year 6 classrooms and current classrooms
fairly accurate detailed map of the entire school

Appendix 10: Table listing the themes and features identified in the ideal school drawings

This table shows the raw data gathered from the ideal school drawings. Each row represents the themes suggested by one pupil.

freedom, nature, active, prominent library, two swimming pools
swimming pool, subject specific classrooms, separate changing rooms
four swimming pools, lots of references to food, large restaurant, specific violin lesson room, music room, specific room for tests, lots of toilets
n/a - no labels or images to analyse
head teacher's office, indoor playground
Rules, subject specific areas, 'quiet room for thinking'
swimming pool, large classroom, iPad room, restaurant
no rules, large library, swimming pool, doodling club room
swimming pool, 'hat room'?, sleeping room, teachers room, iPad room, restaurant
swimming pool, separate changing rooms, restaurant, science dissecting room, no rules, freedom

Appendix 11: An example of a poem written by one of the participants about lunch in the school dining hall

